Dec 23, 2023

TechLife NEWS

TAYLOR SWIFT

THE RECORD-BREAKING ARTIST OF THE YEAR

HOLIDAY SHOPPERS

RETAILERS ARE IMPROVING THEIR DELIVERY SPEEDS

MASS ADOPTION

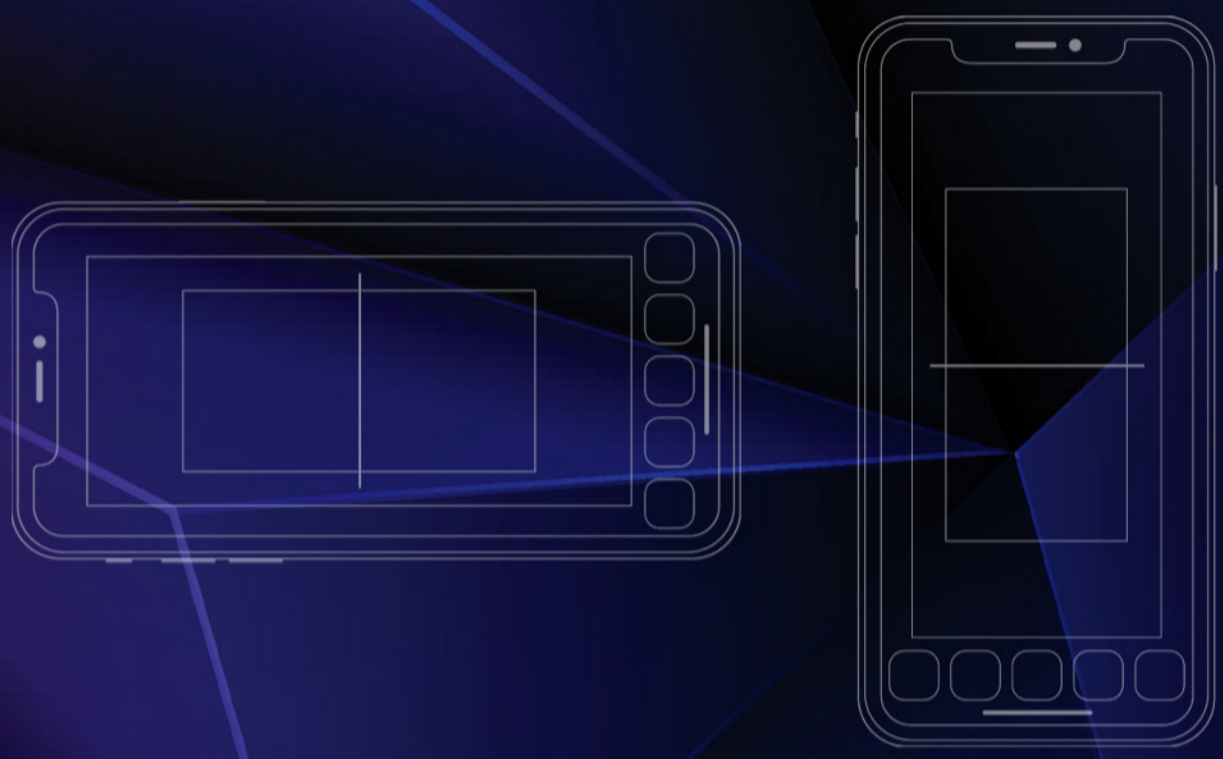
WHITE HOUSE BACKS INDUSTRY STANDARDIZATION OF TESLA'S EV CHARGING

9:41
PhotoArt
photoart.com
Dec 19, 2020
SLR, DSLR
64Mp Tech
After Effects
Elements
Photo &
Graphic
Plugins
the art to create from white to dark, compelling images
Black & White
Single Issue
Subscribe
Home
Previous Editions
Collection
Breaking News
9:41
Fashion
Week
$6.99
Summer - New York
popular aesthetic expression
clothing, footwear, lifestyle, accessories, makeup
trends
A fashion week is a fashion industry event, lasting approximately one week, where fashion designers, brands or "houses" display their latest collections in runway fashion shows to buyers and the media. These events influence trends for the current and upcoming seasons. The most prominent fashion weeks are held in the fashion capitals of the world; New York, London, Milan, and Paris, or the "Big Four" which receive the majority of press coverage.
Single Issue
Subscribe
Home
Previous Editions
Collection
Breaking News
Share

PublishChannel provides the most well-designed app solution to make your publication independent, offering a powerful channel for subscriptions worldwide.

And you keep all revenues directly from App Store™ sales.

Our exclusive design offers a state-of-the-art user interface that is highly interactive with engaging links to web content, video platforms, apps, podcasts, and more. Your app is fully integrated with the production process, seamless in your workflow.



Designed for

Magazines | Newspapers | News Channels | Video Channels

PublishChannel

The World-Class Solution for Publishing

Visit www.publishchannel.com

Luminar 4

Perfect Photo, Sucky Skies?

AI-powered Sky Replacement - Perfection in Seconds

© Sherwin Magsino

Say Goodbye to Bland and Boring Skies

Get Luminar 4, powered by new and innovative technologies like Accent AI and AI Sky Replacement. Instantly replace skies to change the mood of your photo. No complicated masking or brushes required!

Wherever your creative vision takes you, Luminar has the tools, smarts and style to help you achieve your absolute best.
Your Photography. Elevated.

Grab a copy at l.skylum.com/applemag
Use promo code **APPLEMAG** for $10 off your purchase

©2020 Skylum Software USA, Inc. All rights reserved.

SKYLUM Apple Magazine
OFFICIAL PARTNERS

SUMMARY

ELECTRIC VEHICLES OWNERS AND SOLAR ROOFTOPS FIND MUTUAL ATTRACTION **06**

2023: THE YEAR WE PLAYED WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND WEREN'T SURE ... **22**

GOOGLE WILL PAY $700M IN ANTITRUST SETTLEMENT REACHED WITH STATES... **34**

CALIFORNIA IS SET TO BECOME 2ND STATE TO OK RULES FOR TURNING... **44**

WHITE HOUSE BACKS INDUSTRY EFFORT TO STANDARDIZE TESLA'S EV.. **54**

US TREASURY DEPARTMENT ISSUES GUIDELINES AROUND A NEW TAX CREDIT... **68**

TAYLOR SWIFT: THE RECORD-BREAKER OF THE YEAR ACROSS STREAMING... **76**

A GROUP REPRESENTING TIKTOK, META, AND X SUES UTAH OVER STRICT NEW... **98**

GOOD NEWS FOR LATE HOLIDAY SHOPPERS: RETAILERS ARE IMPROVING THEIR... **108**

KANSAS COURTS' COMPUTER SYSTEMS ARE STARTING TO COME BACK ONLINE... **120**

LOVE IT OR HATE IT, SELF-CHECKOUT IS HERE TO STAY. BUT IT'S GOING THROUGH ... **126**

DURING THE 2023 HOLIDAY SEASON, FACE MASKS HAVE SETTLED IN AS AN... **138**

HOW TO MANAGE HOLIDAY SPENDING WHEN YOU'RE DEALING WITH STUDENT... **150**

MARK WAHLBERG ON HIS ACTION-COMEDY 'THE FAMILY PLAN' & HIS DREAMS... **162**

TIMOTHÉE CHALAMET WALTZES THROUGH THE WHIMSICAL 'WONKA' BUT ROALD... **172**

PRINCE HARRY'S PHONE HACKING VICTORY IS A LANDMARK IN THE LONG SAGA... **188**

AMAZON WON'T HAVE TO PAY HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS IN BACK TAXES AFTER... **198**

ADOBE CALLS OFF $20 BILLION DEAL FOR FIGMA AFTER PUSHBACK FROM EUROPE... **206**

THE NETHERLANDS, SOUTH KOREA STEP UP STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP... **212**

ELECTRIC VEHICLES OWNERS AND SOLAR ROOFTOPS FIND MUTUAL ATTRACTION

When Jim Selgo moved to his home in Goodyear, Arizona in 2019, he quickly had rooftop solar installed, having had a positive experience with solar at his previous home.

Less than a year later, motivated to take more action to address climate change, he said, Selgo bought his first electric vehicle, a Nissan Leaf. He hasn't paid for electricity or gasoline since.

With solar, "You take advantage of what you're producing at your own house," he said. "Adding

SolarCity

an EV just increases your savings and adds to the value of the whole project."

Selgo, a retired public school principal who now drives an electric Volkswagen ID.4 SUV, is just one of many people using solar energy to power their EVs on clean electricity, effectively, on sunshine. And it also goes the other way.

"It's probably more common today that you have someone who has a solar energy system who is looking at an EV, just because solar has been around longer," said Becca Jones-Albertus, acting deputy assistant secretary for renewable energy at the U.S. Energy Department. "But we know that many EV owners are looking to install solar so that it helps with their increased electricity use and can support more economical charging at home."

Of 131 million U.S. households, about 4.5 million have added rooftop solar, as its benefits become more known, according to the DOE's Solar Energy Technologies Office. And 2023 set a record with more than 1 million EVs sold in the U.S.

EVs have to plug in to charge up and run, but electricity from the grid often still comes from burning fossil fuels, negating some of the environmental benefit of going electric. Solar can fix that. It's an important point because electricity production and transportation are the largest two sources of greenhouse gas emissions, and therefore climate change, in the U.S., according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Residential solar electric, or photovoltaic systems, convert the sun's rays into electricity when they hit a solar panel. If an owner chooses to buy a set of batteries to pair with the panels, they can have an ongoing "bank" of energy to pull from. Nearly a fifth of new household solar systems in California,

NVIDIA
12.58
SCTY
SCTY
SolarCity
NASDAQ LISTED
+27.0%
10.16
SolarCity

SCTY
SolarCity
NASDAQ LISTED
+2.16
SolarCity

which dominates the rooftop solar market in the U.S., were installed with batteries in 2022.

Automakers are seeing this crossover interest and getting into the business several years after Tesla bought solar company SolarCity in 2016 and launched a solar roof division.

Several legacy car companies are launching efforts to connect customers with energy services, including solar installation contractors. General Motors' energy unit, GM Energy, is one example. The automaker wants to offer a one-stop-shop for customers looking for at-home charging, solar, and other energy management tech.

"That's where we see everything working together," said Derek Sequeira, GM Energy's director of EV ecosystem.

Hyundai Home helps the company's EV customers select home charging and solar solutions. Ford, too, is dabbling in this business.

But access to rooftop solar is not equal, so the combination is not an option for all EV owners. About half of households in the U.S. either don't have control over their roof, or find that it's not adequate because of location, space or orientation, according to the DOE solar office.

There is a push to address that. Community solar projects allow renters or condo owners or other communities to have a share in a small solar array. This form of solar is growing and has contributed to the overall record growth in U.S. solar capacity this year, according to the Solar Energy Industries Association.

Some utilities may also not want customers to produce more solar electricity than they need, because it would mean they have to pay them back for the surplus in the form of credits.

Installation costs can also be prohibitive. A standard system could run a consumer $10,000 to $15,000 or more, according to the Center for Sustainable Energy, a nonprofit in San Diego, California.

But the cost has been coming down. In 2010, a residential rooftop installation could cost $8.70 per watt. That fell to $3.16 per watt by 2022, according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

Federal incentives are making residential solar systems more affordable — at the same time incentives are also aiding EV affordability. The Inflation Reduction Act, which President Joe Biden signed into law in August 2022, allows consumers to claim 30% of what they put into their system as a credit on their next federal tax bill.

Different states also offer varying rebates and incentives. Selgo said his system cost $19,500, but after receiving the 30% federal tax rebate and $1,000 from the state of Arizona at the time, he ultimately paid out around $12,500.

Jerry Schotz bought two EVs in 2021. He was interested in renewable energy and wanted to go electric for all of his household needs — including an electric lawnmower — he said, so "Solar just makes sense." He had it installed at his home in Champaign, Illinois, last year.

"A lot of folks use solar just to power their home, but we're powering our home and our cars with the same solar systems," Schotz said. "When you think about the climate, we're no longer using fossil fuels to drive on the road."

PLAY YOUR FAVORITES

Stream more than 15,000 episodes of your favorite daytime, primetime and late night CBS shows, catch up on classic hits or enjoy exclusive CBS All Access Original Series.

WATCH IT LIVE

Watch live sports, shows and news at home or on-the-go with your local CBS station, CBSN, CBS Sports HQ and ET Live 24/7.

CBS CBSN CBS SPORTS HQ ET LIVE

OBCESS OVER ORIGINALS

Get hooked on critically-acclaimed CBS All Access Original Series.

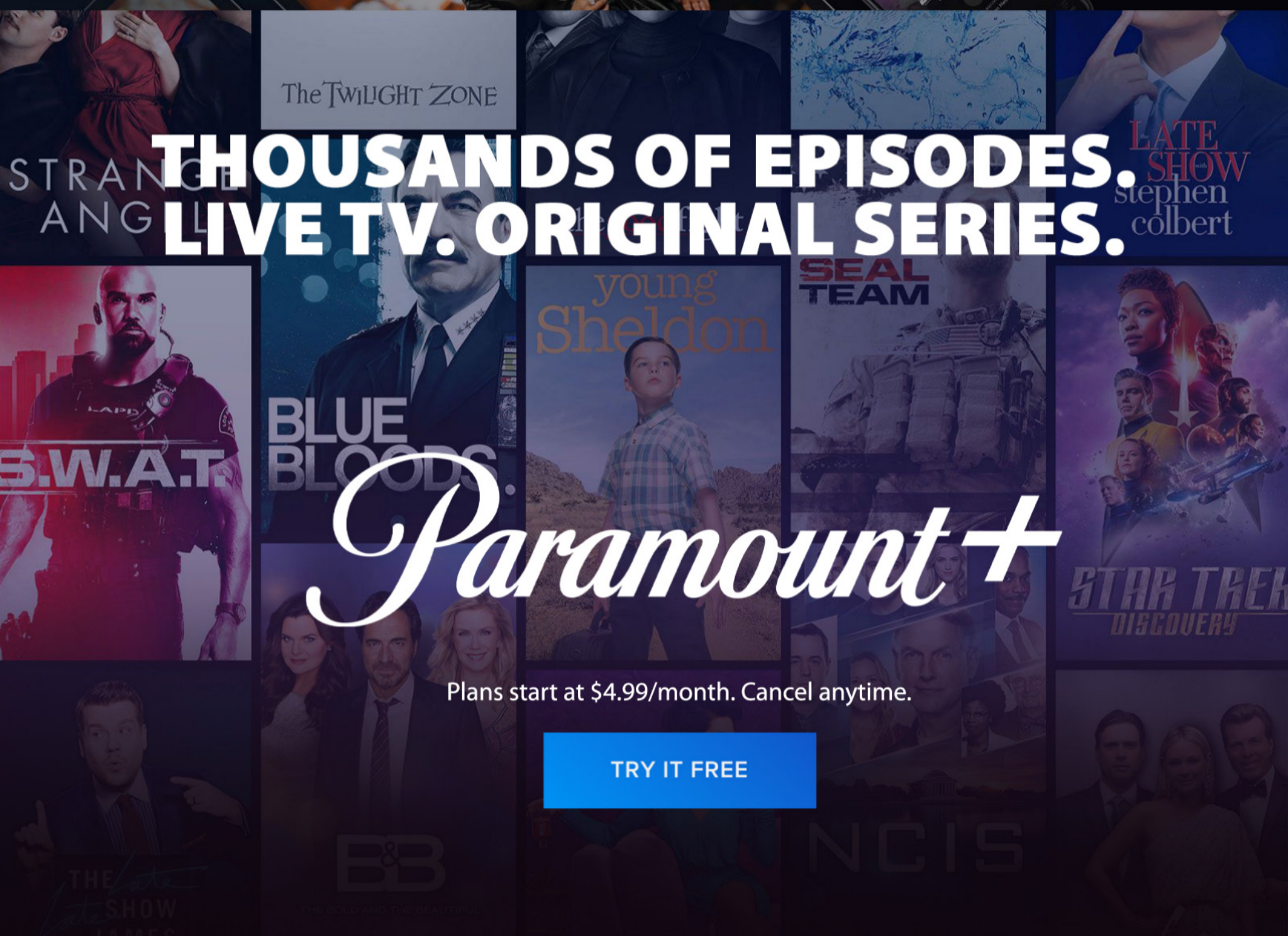
STREAM ACROSS SCREENS

It's easier than ever to watch on your phone, tablet, desktop or streaming media player.

iPad iPhone tv android chromecast firetv

LG PS4 Roku SAMSUNG VIZIO XBOX ONE

xfinity

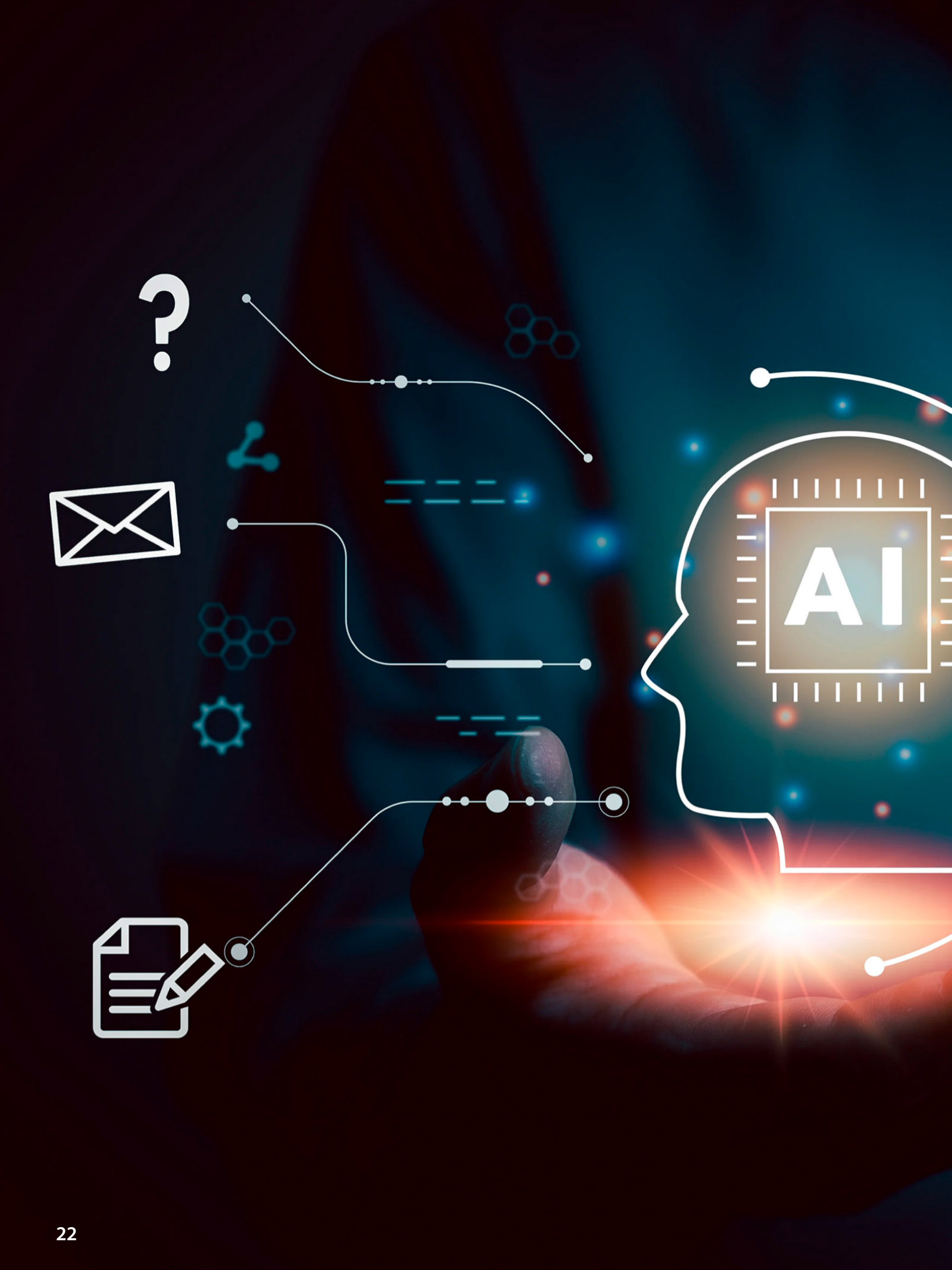


THOUSANDS OF EPISODES. LIVE TV. ORIGINAL SERIES.

Paramount+

Plans start at $4.99/month. Cancel anytime.

TRY IT FREE


AI

2023: THE YEAR WE PLAYED WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AND WEREN'T SURE WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Artificial intelligence went mainstream in 2023 — it was a long time coming yet has a long way to go for the technology to match people's science fiction fantasies of human-like machines.

Catalyzing a year of AI fanfare was ChatGPT. The chatbot gave the world a glimpse of recent advances in computer science even if not everyone figured out quite how it works or what to do with it.

"I would call this an inflection moment," pioneering AI scientist Fei-Fei Li said. "2023 is, in history, hopefully going to be remembered for the profound changes of the technology as well

as the public awakening. It also shows how messy this technology is."

It was a year for people to figure out "what this is, how to use it, what's the impact — all the good, the bad and the ugly," she said.

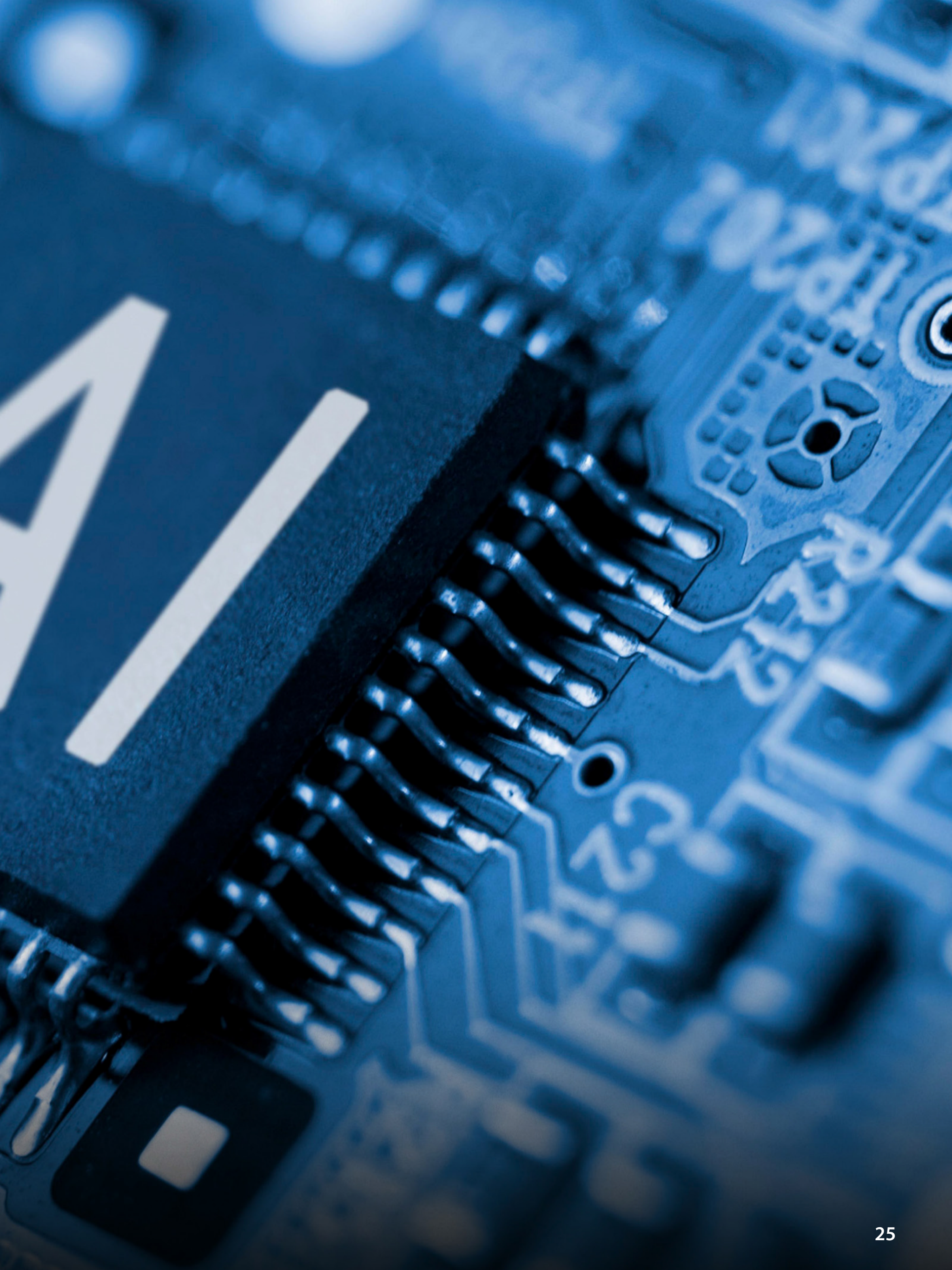
PANIC OVER AI

The first AI panic of 2023 set in soon after New Year's Day when classrooms reopened and schools from Seattle to Paris started blocking ChatGPT. Teenagers were already asking the chatbot — released in late 2022 — to compose essays and answer take-home tests.

AI large language models behind technology such as ChatGPT work by repeatedly guessing the next word in a sentence after having "learned" the patterns of a huge trove of human-written works. They often get facts wrong. But the outputs appeared so natural that it sparked curiosity about the next AI advances and its potential use for trickery and deception.

Worries escalated as this new cohort of generative AI tools — spitting out not just words but novel images, music and synthetic voices — threatened the livelihoods of anyone who writes, draws, strums or codes for a living. It fueled strikes by Hollywood writers and actors and legal challenges from visual artists and bestselling authors.

Some of the AI field's most esteemed scientists warned that the technology's unchecked progress was marching toward outsmarting humans and possibly threatening their existence, while other scientists called their concerns overblown or brought attention to more immediate risks.



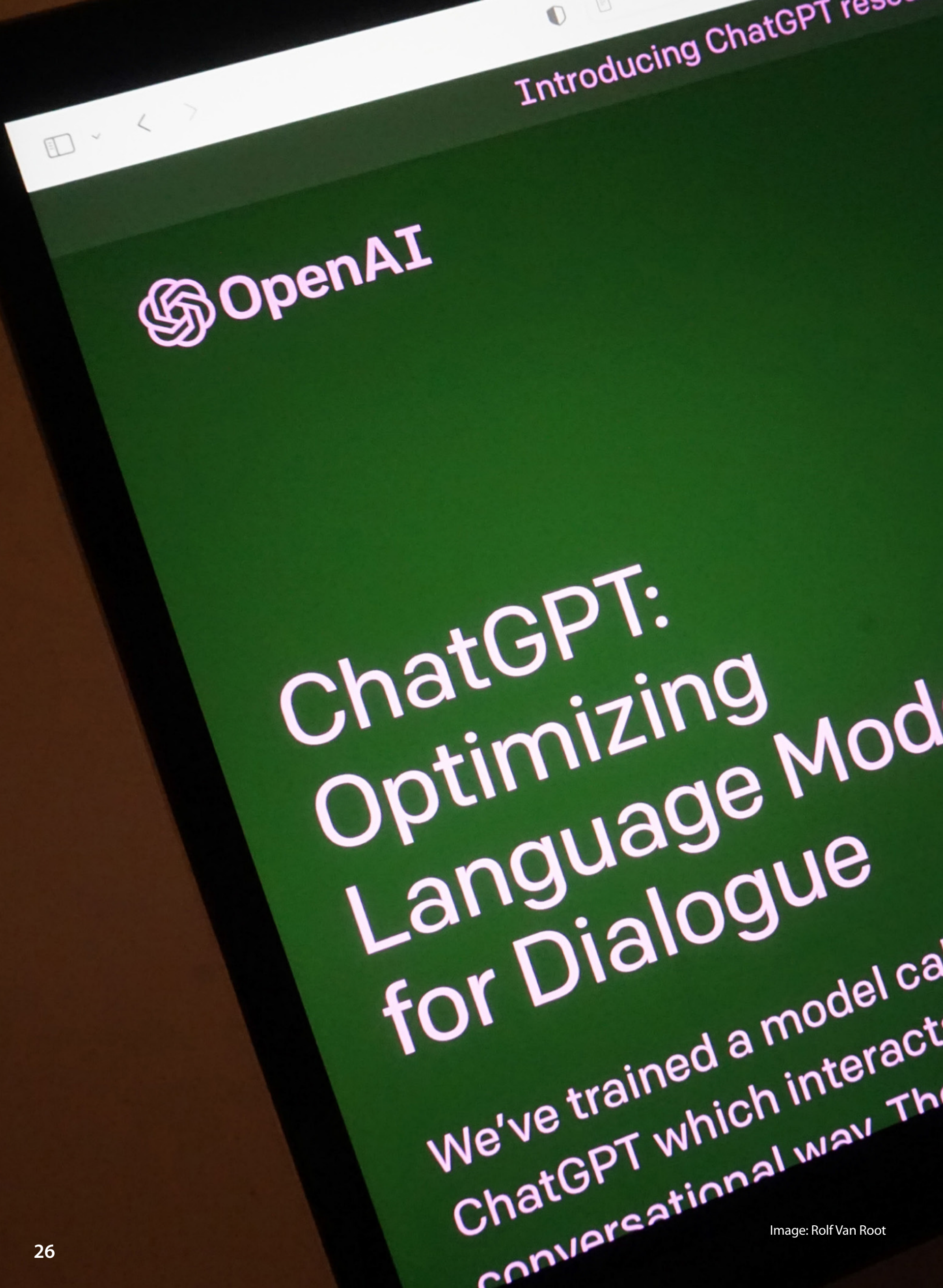


Image: Rolf Van Root

By spring, AI-generated deepfakes — some more convincing than others — had leaped into U.S. election campaigns, where one falsely showed Donald Trump embracing the nation's former top infectious disease expert. The technology made it increasingly difficult to distinguish between real and fabricated war footage in Ukraine and Gaza.

By the end of the year, the AI crises had shifted to ChatGPT's own maker, the San Francisco startup OpenAI, nearly destroyed by corporate turmoil over its charismatic CEO, and to a government meeting room in Belgium, where exhausted political leaders from across the European Union emerged after days of intense talks with a deal for the world's first major AI legal safeguards.

The new AI law will take a few years to fully take effect, and other lawmaking bodies — including the U.S. Congress — are still a long way from enacting their own.

TOO MUCH HYPE?

There's no question that commercial AI products unveiled in 2023 incorporated technological achievements not possible in earlier stages of AI research, which trace back to the mid-20th century.

But the latest generative AI trend is at peak hype, according to the market research firm Gartner, which has tracked what it calls the "hype cycle" of emerging technology since the 1990s. Picture a wooden rollercoaster ticking up to its highest hill, about to careen down into what Gartner describes as a "trough of disillusionment" before coasting back to reality.

"Generative AI is right in the peak of inflated expectations," Gartner analyst Dave

Micko said. "There's massive claims by vendors and producers of generative AI around its capabilities, its ability to deliver those capabilities."

Google drew criticism this month for editing a video demonstration of its most capable AI model, called Gemini, in a way that made it appear more impressive — and human-like.

Micko said leading AI developers are pushing certain ways of applying the latest technology, most of which correspond to their current line of products — be they search engines or workplace productivity software. That doesn't mean that's how the world will use it.

"As much as Google and Microsoft and Amazon and Apple would love us to adopt the way that they think about their technology and that they deliver that technology, I think adoption actually comes from the bottom up," he said.

IS IT DIFFERENT THIS TIME?

It's easy to forget that this isn't the first wave of AI commercialization. Computer vision techniques developed by Li and other scientists helped sort through a huge database of photos to recognize objects and individual faces and help guide self-driving cars. Speech recognition advances made voice assistants like Siri and Alexa a fixture in many people's lives.

"When we launched Siri in 2011, it was at that point the fastest-growing consumer app and the only major mainstream application of AI that people had ever experienced," said Tom Gruber, co-founder of Siri Inc., which Apple bought and made an integral iPhone feature.

OpenAI

But Gruber believes what's happening now is the "biggest wave ever" in AI, unleashing new possibilities as well as dangers.

"We're surprised that we could accidentally encounter this astonishing ability with language, by training a machine to play solitaire on all of the internet," Gruber said. "It's kind of amazing."

The dangers could come fast in 2024, as major national elections in the U.S., India and elsewhere could get flooded with AI-generated deepfakes.

In the longer term, AI technology's rapidly improving language, visual perception and step-by-step planning capabilities could supercharge the vision of a digital assistant — but only if granted access to the "inner loop of our digital life stream," Gruber said.

"They can manage your attention as in, 'You should watch this video. You should read this book. You should respond to this person's communication,'" Gruber said. "That is what a real executive assistant does. And we could have that, but with a really big risk of personal information and privacy."

Your Florida dream house can be a lifetime investment.

RALISTO

Beyond the Real Estate Closing

I'm here to assist you.

+1 (407) 413-4292 | karin@ralisto.com

GOOGLE WILL PAY $700M IN ANTITRUST SETTLEMENT REACHED WITH STATES BEFORE RECENT PLAY STORE TRIAL LOSS

Image: Don Ryan

oogle
Search
I'm Feeling Lucky
re empowering our military service memb

Google has agreed to pay $700 million and make several other concessions to settle allegations that it had been stifling competition against its Android app store — the same issue that went to trial in a another case that could result in even bigger changes.

Although Google struck the deal with state attorneys general in September, the settlement's terms weren't revealed until late Monday in documents filed in San Francisco federal court. The disclosure came a week after a federal court jury rebuked Google for deploying anticompetitive tactics in its Play Store for Android apps.

The settlement with the states includes $630 million to compensate U.S. consumers funneled into a payment processing system that state attorneys general alleged drove up the prices for digital transactions within apps downloaded from the Play Store. That store caters to the Android software that powers most of the world's smartphones.

Like Apple does in its iPhone app store, Google collects commissions ranging from 15% to 30% on in-app purchases — fees that state attorneys general contended drove prices higher than they would have been had there been an open market for payment processing. Those commissions generated billions of dollars in profit annually for Google, according to evidence presented in the recent trial focused on its Play Store.

Consumers eligible for a piece of the $630 million compensation fund are supposed to be automatically notified about various options for how they can receive their cut of the money.

ANTITRUST LAW

Another $70 million of the pre-trial settlement will cover the penalties and other costs that Google is being forced to pay to the states.

Google also agreed to make other changes designed to make it even easier for consumers to download and install Android apps from other outlets besides its Play Store for the next five years. It will refrain from issuing as many security warnings, or "scare screens," when alternative choices are being used.

The makers of Android apps will also gain more flexibility to offer alternative payment choices to consumers instead of having transactions automatically processed through the Play Store and its commission system. Apps will also be able to promote lower prices available to consumers who choose an alternate to the Play Store's payment processing.

Washington D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb hailed the settlement as a victory for the tens of millions of people in the U.S. that rely on Android phones to help manage their lives. "For far too long, Google's anticompetitive practices in the distribution of apps deprived Android users of choices and forced them to pay artificially elevated prices," Schwalb said.

Wilson White, Google's vice president of government affairs and public policy, framed the deal as a positive for the company, despite the money and concessions it entails. The settlement "builds on Android's choice and flexibility, maintains strong security protections, and retains Google's ability to compete with other (software) makers, and invest in the Android ecosystem for users and developers," White wrote in a blog post.

Google Play
SELECT
START
IOS
Y
X
B
A

Although the state attorneys general hailed the settlement as a huge win for consumers, it didn't go far enough for Epic Games, which spearheaded the attack on Google's app store practices with an antitrust lawsuit filed in August 2020.

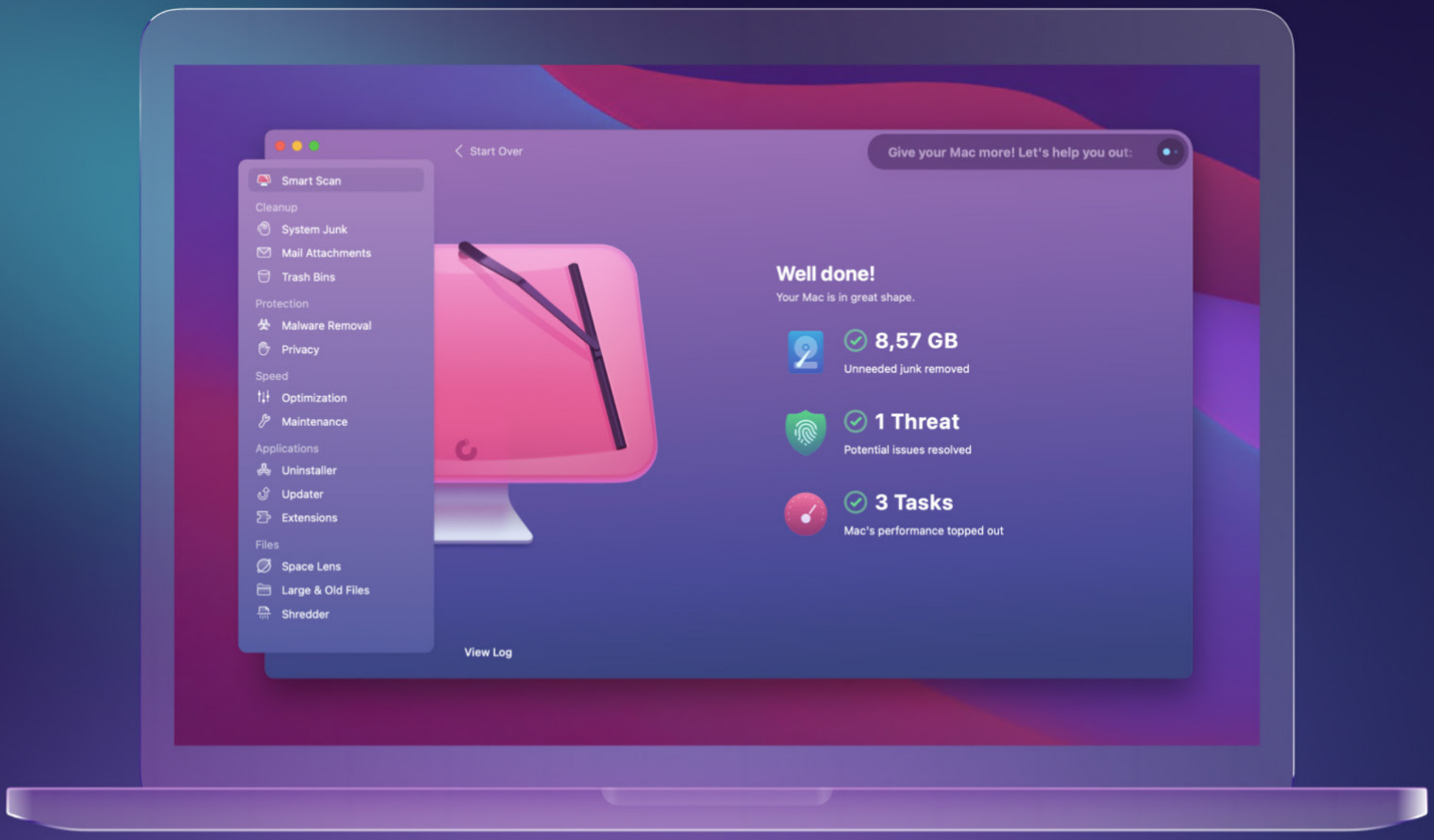
Epic, the maker of the popular Fortnite video game, rebuffed the settlement in September and instead chose to take its case to trial, even though it had already lost on most of its key claims in a similar trial targeting Apple and its iPhone app store in 2021.

The Apple trial, though, was decided by a federal judge instead of the jury that vindicated Epic with a unanimous verdict that Google had built anticompetitive barriers around the Play Store. Google has vowed to appeal the verdict.

But the trial's outcome nevertheless raises the specter of Google potentially being ordered to pay even more money as punishment for its past practices and making even more dramatic changes to its lucrative Android app ecosystem.

Those changes will be determined next year by U.S. District Judge James Donato, who presided over the Epic Games trial. Donato also still must approve Google's Play Store settlement with the states.

Google faces an even bigger legal threat in another antitrust case targeting its dominant search engine that serves as the centerpiece of a digital ad empire that generates more than $200 billion in sales annually. Closing arguments in a trial pitting Google against the Justice Department are scheduled for early May before a federal judge in Washington D.C.



CleanMyMac X

Your Mac.
As good as new.

Learn More

Coca-Cola store

FREE SHIPPING
ON ALL COKE STORE ORDERS OVER $60!

www.cokestore.com

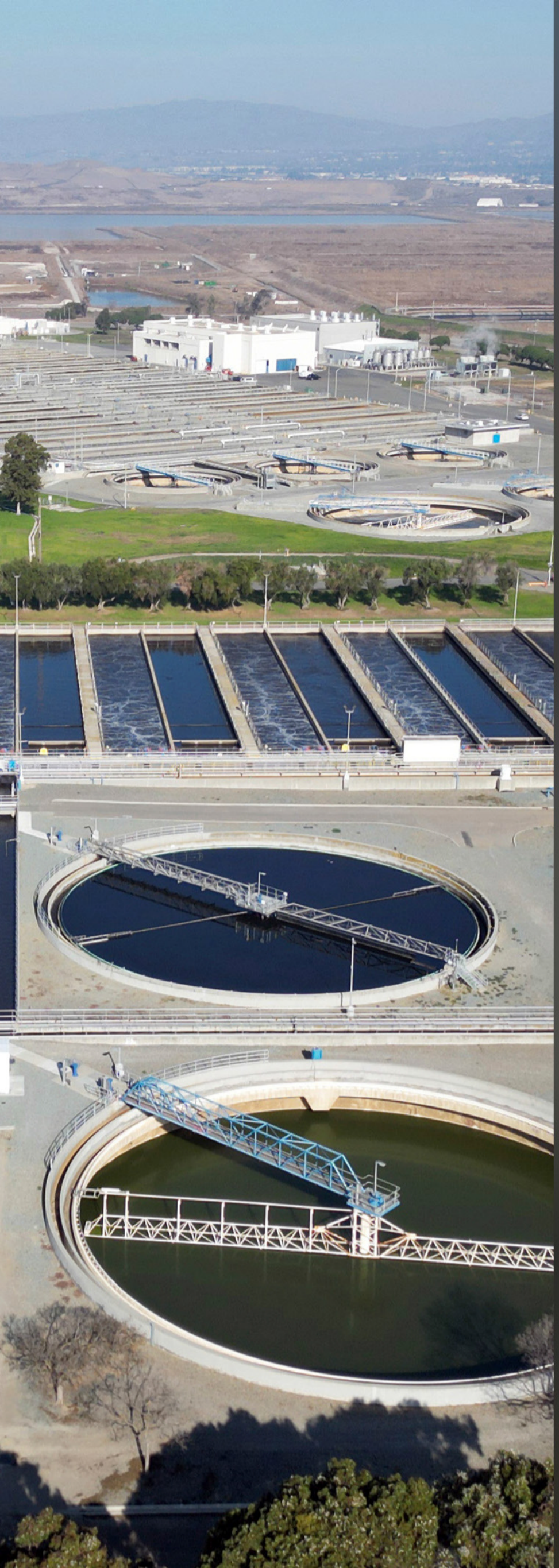
CALIFORNIA IS SET TO BECOME 2ND STATE TO OK RULES FOR TURNING WASTEWATER INTO DRINKING WATER

When a toilet is flushed in California, the water can end up in a lot of places — the ice in a skating rink, the manufactured snow on ski slopes, in pipes providing irrigation for farmland. And — coming soon — in your drinking glass.

California regulators on Tuesday are set to vote on new rules to let water agencies recycle wastewater and put it right back into the pipes that carry drinking water to homes, schools and businesses.

It's a big step for a state that has struggled for decades to have a reliable source of drinking water for its more than 39 million residents. And it signals a shift in public opinion on a subject

ENVIRONMENT



that as recently as two decades ago prompted backlash that scuttled similar projects.

Since then, California has been through multiple extreme droughts, including the most recent one that scientists say was the driest three-year period on record and left the state's reservoirs at dangerously low levels.

"Water is so precious in California. It is important that we use it more than once," said Jennifer West, managing director of WateReuse California, a group advocating for recycled water.

California has been using recycled wastewater for decades. The Ontario Reign minor league hockey team has used it to make ice for its rink in Southern California. Soda Springs Ski Resort near Lake Tahoe has used it to make snow. And farmers in the Central Valley, where much of the nation's vegetables, fruits and nuts are grown, use it to water their crops.

But it hasn't been used directly for drinking water. Orange County operates a large water purification system that recycles wastewater and then uses it to refill underground aquifers. The water mingles with the groundwater for months before being pumped up and used for drinking water again.

California's new rules would let — but not require — water agencies to take wastewater, treat it, and then put it right back into the drinking water system. California would be just the second state to allow this, following Colorado.

The rules would require the wastewater be treated for all pathogens and viruses, even if the pathogens and viruses aren't in the wastewater. That's different from regular water treatment rules, which only require treatment for known

KROHNE
WED
a xyle

ECO
n brand

pathogens, said Darrin Polhemus, deputy director of the division of drinking water for the California Water Resources Control Board.

In fact, the treatment is so stringent it removes all of the minerals that make fresh drinking water taste good — meaning they have to be added back at the end of the process.

"It's at the same drinking water quality, and probably better in many instances," Polhemus said.

It's expensive and time consuming to build these treatment facilities, so Polhemus said it will only be an option for bigger, well-funded cities — at least initially. That includes San Diego, where city officials have a plan to build a water recycling program that they say would account for nearly half of the city's water by 2035.

Water agencies will need public support to complete these projects. The rules require water agencies to tell customers about the recycled water before they start doing it.

In San Jose, local officials have opened the Silicon Valley Advanced Water Purification Center for public tours "so that people can see that this is a very high tech process that ensures the water is super clean," said Kirsten Struve, assistant officer for the water supply division at the Santa Clara Valley Water District.

Right now, the agency uses the water for things like irrigating parks and playing fields. But they plan to use it for drinking water in the future.

"We live in California where the drought happens all the time. And with climate change, it will only get worse," Struve said. "And this is a drought resistant supply that we will need in the future to meet the demands of our communities."

Gemini 2

The intelligent duplicate file finder

Learn more >

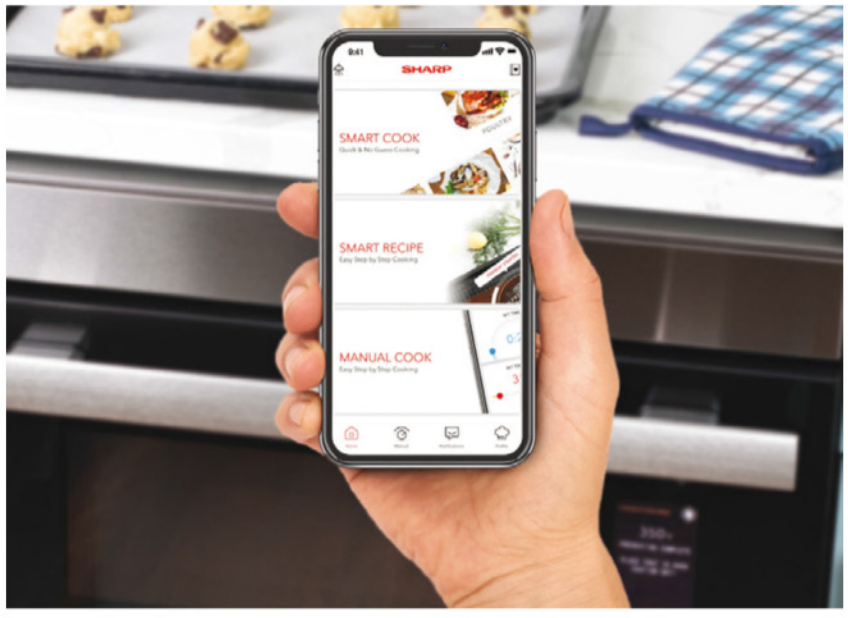
SHARP | Simply Better Living

SUPERSTEAM+™ BUILT-IN WALL OVEN

SSC2489DS

The Sharp® SuperSteam+ Built-In Wall Oven is the start of a cooking revolution. With Wi-Fi enabled IoT features, the innovations within this steam oven are a perfect match for modern cooking needs.

While regular steam only reaches 212°F, the SuperSteam+ oven can create superheated steam up to 485°F. Steam this hot can roast meats and caramelize sugars so your food can be brown and crispy on the outside, tender and juicy on the inside. With the Sharp SuperSteam+ Oven, you can grill without smoke, roast without drying, and get the roasty-toasty, tasty results you desire.



SEE FOR YOURSELF

Get started right away with built-in recipes and download the Sharp SuperSteam+ Oven app* to enable the smart features and access custom recipes powered by SideChef.

The new Sharp SuperSteam+ Built-In Wall Oven features Steam Bake for superior breads, and Water Bath for cheesecakes, custards and puddings.

www.sharpusa.com | simplybetterliving.sharpusa.com

*Mobile Application and Home Assistant Skill available upon commercial release. © 2020 Sharp Electronics Corporation. All rights reserved. Sharp, Supersteam™ Oven and all related trademarks are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sharp Corporation and/or its affiliated entities. Product specifications and design are subject to change without notice. Internal capacity calculated by measuring maximum width, depth and height. Actual capacity for holding food is less.

WHITE HOUSE BACKS INDUSTRY EFFORT TO STANDARDIZE TESLA'S EV CHARGING PLUGS

TESLA

The White House is lending its support to an auto industry effort to standardize Tesla's electric vehicle charging plugs for all EVs in the United States, part of a broad effort to stimulate their sales to help combat climate change.

More than 1 million EVs have been sold in the United States in 2023, a record, but that pace still lags behind sales in such countries as China and Germany. One key reason is that the limited availability of charging infrastructure across the country has been a widespread concern for many would-be buyers of EVs and has held back their sales in the United States.

Tesla, the leader in the EV market, operates the largest network of fast-chargers. And many of its Supercharger stations are in prime locations along highly traveled corridors, where other charging stations are sparse.

This week, SAE International, formerly the Society of Automotive Engineers, confirmed as a new standard Tesla's North American Charging Standard connector. That connector, known as NACS, links Tesla's EVs to the company's network. In June, the automotive organization had said it would set standards for Tesla's EV charging plug to try to allow it to work with all EVs.

The new standard "ensures that any vehicle or charging equipment supplier or manufacturer will be able to use, manufacture, or deploy the connector and expands charging access for current and future EV drivers across the country," the U.S. Joint Office of Energy and Transportation said in a statement.

The standard could help boost consumer confidence in EVs as the White House, the auto industry and other stakeholders strive to

TESLA

encourage mass adoption. President Joe Biden has made transportation decarbonization a top priority and has set the ambitious goal of having 50 percent of all new vehicle sales in the United States be electric by 2030.

Tesla's charging standard has long been in conflict with the Combined Charging Standard connector, which most other automakers have incorporated in their EVs. The announcement essentially formalizes what has already been happening across the industry this year.

Tesla agreed earlier this year to open parts of its network, with plans to provide access to at least 7,500 of its chargers to non-Teslas by the end of 2024. Since then, nearly all major global automakers have signed on to use NACS with their EVs and join Tesla's charging network in the future, with the exception of some holdouts including Stellantis and Volkswagen.

"Now, nobody can say it's just 'the Tesla thing,'" said Loren McDonald, CEO of EVAdoption LLC, an independent industry analysis firm that tracks NACS. "There's nothing now to hold them back."

By next year, Ford, General Motors and others say they plan to provide adapters to customers whose EVs are now equipped with the CCS technology so they can plug into the Tesla network without needing a NACS connector. Most of these automakers will officially begin equipping their EVs with NACS starting in 2025.

Senior Biden administration officials told that they expect many vehicles to use both connectors on the road for some time.

McDonald cautioned, though, that the transition in charger technology and the distribution of

adapters may leave many EV drivers confused.

"We are still going to have several years of millions of CCS connector vehicles on the road, and they're going to last a long time," McDonald said. "Until we know how the automakers are actually going to distribute these adapters, to me it's really unknown how it's going to help solve this problem over the next couple of years if you're an existing CCS owner.

"The reality of all of this, is we're going to be living in adapter hell for the next several years and that transition, then, is problematic for mainstream consumers who say, 'I don't get this.'"

At the same time, some automakers are still investing in their own charging initiatives without Tesla. Mercedes-Benz is building its own network, and seven automakers announced plans to build out fast-charging together.

Tesla did not respond to request for comment.

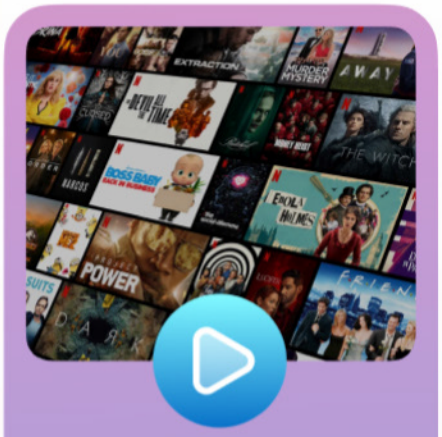
TESLA
5A
5B

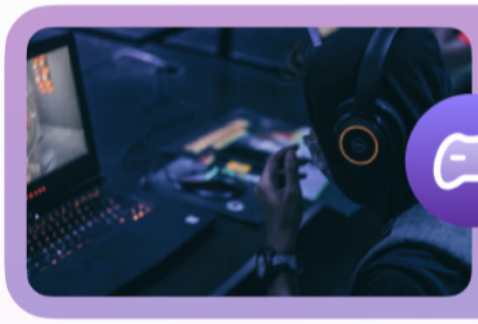
The Biden administration's $1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure law, signed into effect in November 2021, set aside $7.5 billion to building a nationwide EV charging network.

The Federal Highway Administration established requirements for federally funded charging stations that require a CCS plug, though it also allowed other plugs. The agency will now determine how the new standard for the Tesla plug meets those requirements.

The administration and climate advocates regard widespread EV ownership as one way to help reduce the transportation sector's reliance on fossil fuels, a key contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

ClearVPN





The only VPN you'll ever need

Get ClearVPN

Lightinthebox.com

One World, One Market

Offering high quality products in best price for global customers

US TREASURY DEPARTMENT ISSUES GUIDELINES AROUND A NEW TAX CREDIT FOR SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL

The Biden administration released long-awaited guidance around tax credits for aviation fuel that reduces emissions of greenhouse gases compared with fuel made from crude oil.

Some environmentalists expressed concern that the Treasury Department guidelines could allow credits for fuel made from corn and other crops that they consider poor choices because of the water and other resources needed to grow them.

Midwest lawmakers and companies that produce corn-based ethanol praised the guidelines, although their enthusiasm could be short-lived.

Congress approved the credits as part of President Joe Biden's Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which included provisions designed to boost cleaner energy. The credits are designed to increase the supply and bring down the current high price of sustainable aviation fuel, or SAF.

Producers will be eligible for tax credits ranging from $1.25 to $1.75 per gallon, depending on how much their fuel reduces emissions compared with conventional products such as kerosene-based jet fuel.

On a key issue — and after months of deliberations — the Treasury Department accepted measuring those emission reductions by using a model that was developed by the U.S. Energy Department and which is supported by the ethanol industry.

However, Treasury said the Biden administration plans to update the model by March 1, leaving uncertainty around the eventual tax treatment of ethanol used to power airplanes.

Treasury said the update will include "new modeling of key feedstocks and processes used in aviation fuel," and will consider the impact on emissions from growing crops used to make the fuel.

The Environmental Defense Fund said it would withhold final judgment on the guidelines until March, but the guidelines could put the U.S. out of step with international standards.

"Our initial assessment is that this would be a blank check for fuels made from sugar cane,

FLAP
25
30
HORN
CUTOUT
40
FLAP
DOWN
STAB TRIM
NORMAL

soybean and rapeseed — none of which are sustainable or consistent with Congress' intent," said the group's senior vice president, Mark Brownstein.

Ethanol supporters countered that the Energy Department model provides a precise way to measure the benefits of agricultural feedstocks used in sustainable aviation fuel.

The standard "is great, and I'm glad that Treasury is finally realizing it," said Sen. Joni Ernst, a Republican from Iowa, a major corn-producing state.

Airlines for America, a trade group for the biggest U.S. carriers, praised the Treasury guidelines, which it said "will help to accelerate the production and availability of SAF and stimulate new investment."

Around 2% to 3% of global greenhouse gas emissions come from aviation, according to estimates, but that share is expected to grow as air travel continues to boom. Widespread use of electric-powered airplanes is generally considered decades away.

Digiarty MacXDVD

56% OFF

MACX DVD RIPPER PRO

Convert any DVD Movies to Videos in 5 Minutes

Learn More >>

- Convert all old and new DVD movies to MP4, MOV.
- Convert DVD to all iPhone, iPad, Apple TV, Android, etc.
- Bypass DVD copy protections of all types of DVDs.
- Edit, cut, crop, merge video, add subtitle to video.
- No.1 fast speed, no quality loss thanks to GPU acceleration.

Buy Full Version
~~$67.95~~ **for only $29.95**

30 DAY 30 Day Money Back | Free Lifetime Upgrade | 7X24 Tech Support

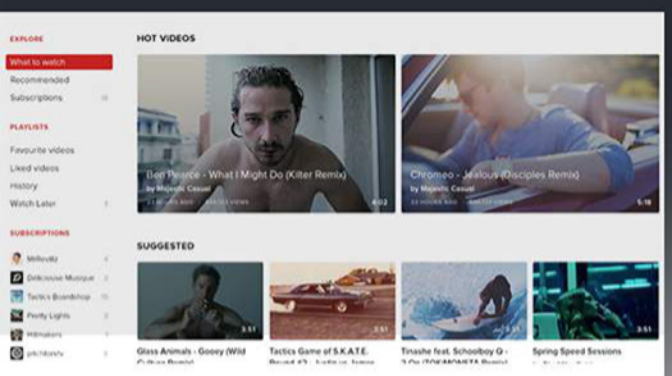
Digiarty MacXDVD

50% OFF

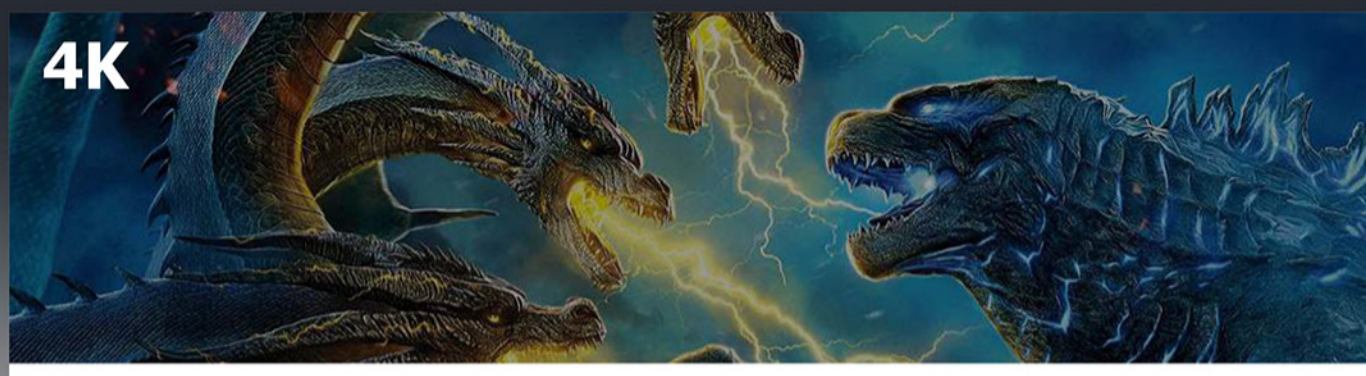
MACX VIDEO CONVERTER PRO

The Fastest Tool to Convert, Resize, Cut, Download 4K, HD Videos.

Learn More >>

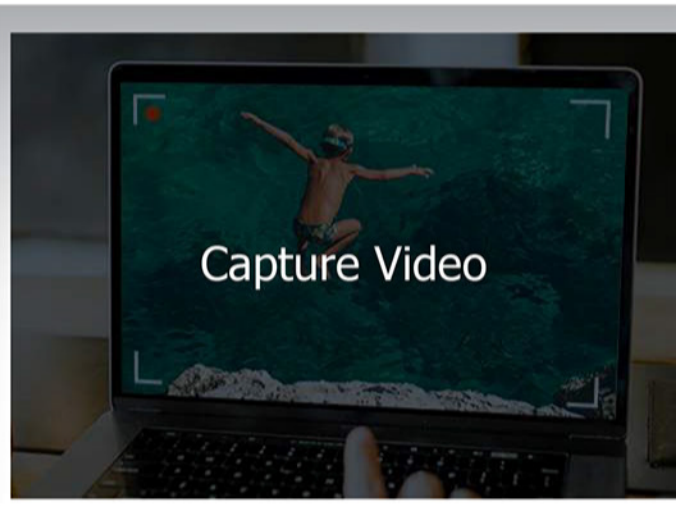


Download



4K Support

Compress



- Convert 4K/HD videos to MP4, MOV for Apple, Android
- Download videos from YouTube and 1000+ sites
- Compress video file size without quality loss
- Edit video clips with a few clicks
- GPU acceleration tech, no. 1 fast speed.

Buy Full Version
~~$59.95~~ **for only $29.95**

30 DAY 30 Day Money Back | Free Lifetime Upgrade | 7X24 Tech Support

Taylor Swift

THE RECORD-BREAKER OF THE YEAR
ACROSS STREAMING & STADIUMS

2023 will be remembered as the year of Taylor Swift, with the star reigning supreme and redefining the parameters of success in the music industry. Garnering the title of Apple Music's Artist of the Year, Swift's influence spanned across streaming services, concert stadiums, and the silver screen, marking an era that won't be forgotten fast.

Music Awards

THE YEAR OF SWIFT

Unless you've been living under a rock, the chances are that you've heard Taylor Swift's music this year. From January to October alone, the 'Shake It Off' star's presence was omnipresent on Apple Music, with an astonishing 65 songs securing spots in the Global Daily Top 100, an achievement unprecedented in the platform's history. Her influence was equally palpable in concert venues, where fans from diverse backgrounds assembled to witness her musical storytelling. Swift's streaming numbers skyrocketed, especially around the Taylor Swift Eras Tour, which is set to become the highest-grossing music tour of all time.

The commencement of the tour in March saw a 61% global increase in her streams, a testament to her enduring popularity and the excitement her music generates. The tour's setlist, featuring a blend of old favorites and new hits, became the most-streamed of the year. Songs like "Bad Blood," "Blank Space," and "Wildest Dreams" found new life on the charts, resonating with both long-time fans and new listeners, cementing her as the Queen of Pop. At no other time has a performer had such an impact on the charts, particularly with songs now years old, demonstrating her star power and cross-generational appeal.

Image: Mobilesyrup

DIGITAL SUCCESS

The latest success for Brand Taylor is the release of a live recording of the Eras Tour, which exemplifies Swift's multifaceted talent. Released on Swift's 34th birthday, this extended version of the concert film includes additional songs and offers fans a 3-hour immersive experience. The drop comes off the bat of a sell-out theater release, where "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" surpassed $100 million in global pre-sales and broke AMC's record for highest ticket sales revenue during a single day. The show is enjoying similar success with other movie theater brands and is performing incredibly well internationally, too, in territories where the star won't perform live.

The release highlighted her prowess as a performer and her ability to translate the concert experience into a cinematic masterpiece. Available on Apple TV, the movie has been streamed millions of times already and documents Taylor's current world tour, though the star has come under some scrutiny for not allowing consumers to purchase a copy, with the movie only available to rent and just for 48 hours, with it costing £15.99 in the UK and $19.89 in the United States and Canada.

Image: Mobilesyrup

1989
TAYLOR'S VERSION

TAYLOR'S VERSION

It's easy to scratch your head when considering just how Taylor has enjoyed such meteoric success in 2023, and the truth is not what you might have thought. Swift's decision to re-release her music albums was a bold step, **allowing her to reclaim her narrative** after the rights were sold to Scooter Braun in one of the industry's most controversial stories. The star vowed to re-record her entire discography so she could hold the rights to the songs, and each new release has been bigger than the last. These re-releases resonated deeply with her audience, contributing significantly to her streaming success and reinforcing her position as an artist of the people. The re-recording of her album **1989 broke streaming records when it dropped,** selling the equivalent of 1,653,000 copies in the United States. The album was available to stream on Apple Music and Spotify from day one, further cementing its popularity in the US.

1989
TAYLOR'S VERSION
Available October 27
PRE-ORDER NOW

THE APPLE MUSIC AWARD

Owing to her success, Taylor has been much awarded in 2023. Earlier in the month, she was **named TIME Magazine's Person of the Year,** She won ten awards at the Billboard Music Awards, a GRAMMY for Best Music Video at the 2023 GRAMMYs thanks to "All Too Well: The Short Film," becoming the first artist to win the category, and much more, including the coveted Apple Music Award for 2023. The award was not just a trophy but a symbol of the extraordinary craftsmanship in music. Featuring Apple's custom silicon wafer, it represents the technological advances that have revolutionized how music is consumed globally. This award is a fitting tribute to Swift's influence in both the music and technology realms. Speaking of the news earlier in the year, Swift said: "I am so honored to be Apple Music's Artist of the Year. Thank you to every single one

of you for making this year the most incredible, joyful, celebratory year ever." Oliver Schusser, Apple's VP of Apple Music and Beats, said that Swift's impact on music was "absolutely undeniable. She is a generation-defining artist and a true change agent in the music industry."

The Era Tour's availability on various video-on-demand platforms like Apple TV is just the beginning of what promises to be a continued presence in the digital entertainment space. **Rumors of negotiations for a free streaming release** and other ventures signify Swift's keen understanding of the evolving landscape of media consumption. The star is also widely expected to release a new version of her album Reputation in the coming months, **with several hints towards a release date,** and the Eras Tour continues into 2024 with dates across Europe and the United Kingdom.

Swift's journey through 2023 is not merely a story of commercial success but a narrative of artistic evolution and influence. Her ability to resonate with a global audience, reinvent herself continually, and push the boundaries of the music industry underscores her status as a trailblazer, and we can't wait to see what the star does next.

Run Your Private Cloud Office

All-in-one suite for your business

Make use of ONLYOFFICE online editors integrated with collaboration platform:
mail, CRM, projects, calendar and much more.

180-Day Free Trial

GET ONLYOFFICE NOW

ONLYOFFICE by Ascensio System SIA offers a powerful office suite that comprises online editors for text documents, spreadsheets and presentations highly compatible with Microsoft Office and OpenDocument file formats. ONLYOFFICE provides users with multiple editing tools and collaborative features ensuring greater team workflow, and seamless work with complex formatting and objects within your web solution.

100% compatible with MS Office formats

www.onlyoffice.com

ONLYOFFICE

iPhone ›

iPad ›

Mac ›

Apple Watch ›

AirPods ›

Beats ›

Apple TV ›

Accessories ›

HomePod ›

my BEST BUY

Exclusive savings on select Apple products with member pricing.

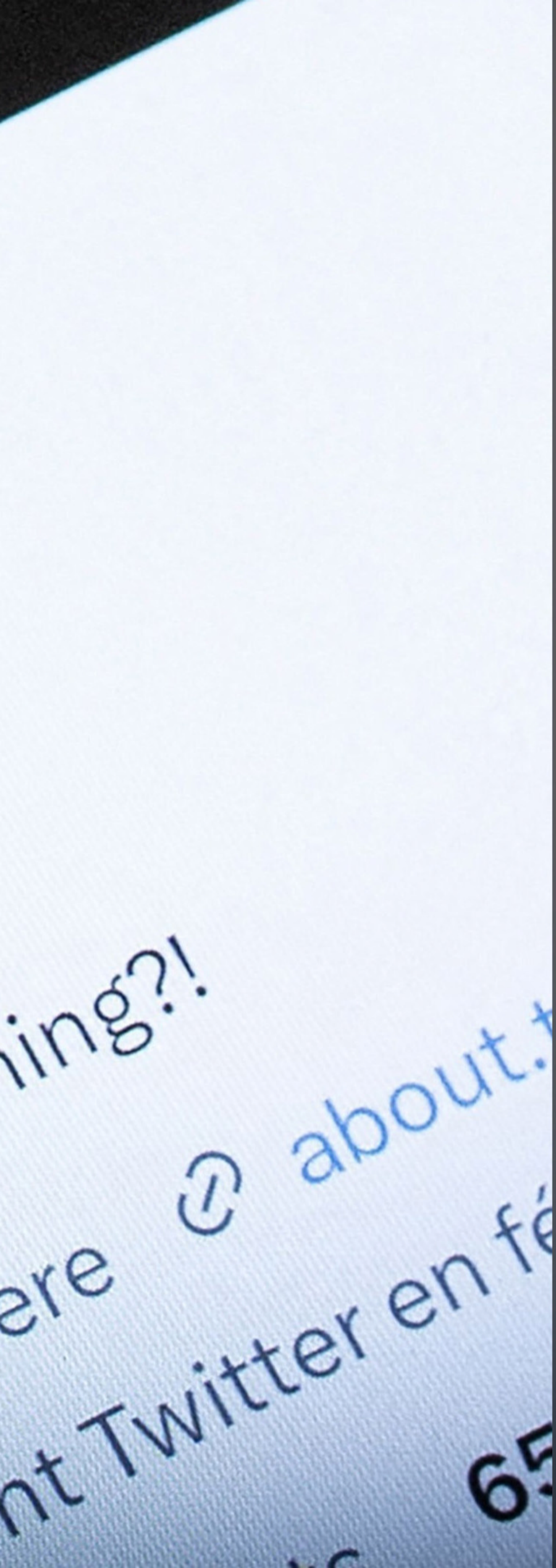
Plus, get My Best Buy® rewards on all Apple products only with the My Best Buy® Credit Card.

Terms and conditions apply.

Best Buy app
Learn more ›

A GROUP REPRESENTING TIKTOK, META, AND X SUES UTAH OVER STRICT NEW LIMITS ON APP USE FOR MINORS

@Twitter
What's happen
everywhe



A trade group that represents TikTok and other major tech companies sued Utah this week over its first-in-the-nation laws requiring children and teens to obtain parental consent to use social media apps.

Two laws signed in March by Republican Gov. Spencer Cox will prohibit minors from using social media between the hours of 10:30 p.m. and 6:30 a.m. unless authorized by a parent — and require age verification to open and maintain a social media account in the state.

The restrictions are designed to protect children from targeted advertisements and addictive features that could negatively impact their mental health. Both laws take effect March 1, 2024.

The NetChoice trade group argues in its federal lawsuit that although Utah's regulations are well-intentioned, they are unconstitutional because they restrict access to public content, compromise data security and undermine parental rights.

"We are fighting to ensure that all Utahns can embrace digital tools without the forceful clutch of government control," said Chris Marchese, Director of the NetChoice Litigation Center. The trade association includes many of the world's leading social media companies, including TikTok, Snapchat parent company Snap Inc., Facebook and Instagram parent company Meta, and X, formerly known as Twitter.

Cox predicted there would be lawsuits challenging both bills but said he wasn't worried because there is a growing body of research that demonstrates how social media use can

negatively impact the mental health outcomes of children.

"I'm not going to back down from a potential legal challenge when these companies are killing our kids," Cox argued earlier this year.

The governor's office did not immediately respond to emails seeking comment on the lawsuit. The office of Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes will represent the state in court.

"The State of Utah is reviewing the lawsuit but remains intently focused on the goal of this legislation: Protecting young people from negative and harmful effects of social media use," spokesperson Richard Piatt said.

In another lawsuit filed by NetChoice, a federal judge temporarily blocked Arkansas from enforcing its new law requiring parental consent for minors to create new social media accounts. Similar laws in Texas and Louisiana have not yet taken effect.

Utah's state laws impose steep fines for social media companies that do not comply with the age-verification rule, which NetChoice says may lead companies to collect an excess of personal information from users that could end up threatening their online safety. The state regulations prohibit companies from using any design or feature that causes a child to become addicted to their app.

Under the laws, parents will have access to their children's accounts and can more easily sue social media companies that they claim have caused their children harm. The laws shift the burden of proof from the families onto the social media companies, requiring

Meta

them to demonstrate that their products were not harmful. Any social media platform with at least five million users is subject to the new regulations.

The lawsuit also challenges the state-imposed social media curfew, arguing that it could negatively impact children by cutting them off from the news, study tools and communications with their peers.

NetChoice has asked a federal judge to halt the laws from taking effect while its case moves through the legal system.

Made in the USA
jewelry you'll live in and love!
15% off your next purchase
with code: FIFTEEN
brook & york
brookandyork.com

fromyouflowers.com

20% OFF SITEWIDE »

All gifts eligible for no contact delivery.

GOOD NEWS FOR LATE HOLIDAY SHOPPERS: RETAILERS ARE IMPROVING THEIR DELIVERY SPEEDS

Haven't ordered any of your holiday gifts yet?

Well, you might find solace in discovering some of America's biggest retailers are working to increase their shipping speeds to please shoppers expecting faster and faster deliveries.

Walmart, Target and Amazon are all-in on the shipping wars, a move retail experts say will help them maintain a competitive edge against low-cost Chinese retailers Shein and Temu. For Walmart and Target, their investments are also aimed at narrowing the gap in delivery speed with Amazon, which has set the standard for fast shipping and remains the king of speed.

Image: Julia Nikhinson

Amazon packages have been arriving at the doors of Prime customers even faster this year under the company's new distribution model, which divides the country into eight regions and predominantly ships items from warehouses in those areas. The idea, according to Amazon, is to get shipments to travel shorter distances with fewer touchpoints, which helps the company not only speed up deliveries but also cuts down on costs.

Previously, the Seattle-based e-commerce giant used to fulfill orders from warehouses across the country. In July, it said 76% of customer orders were being fulfilled within their region, up from 62% before the change.

"We remain on pace to deliver the fastest delivery speeds for Prime customers in our 29-year history," Amazon CEO Andy Jassy said in October during an earnings call with analysts.

Company executives have noted faster shipping is also being driven by Amazon's expansion of same-day delivery, which was first rolled out in 2015 to Prime members who currently pay $139 a year for free two-day shipping and other perks. Same-day delivery sites are smaller warehouses that are located in metro areas and predominantly store the top 100,000 products customers want. Amazon Vice President of Delivery Experience Sarah Mathew said the company currently has 55 of these sites in the country. And it has plans to double the number in the coming years.

"Psychologically, fast delivery is very important to the consumer when ordering online," said Neil Saunders, managing director of GlobalData Retail. "That is why everyone is trying to push

out more into this space even though it's very expensive to support and it often requires a lot of new infrastructure."

To catch up, Walmart and Target have been pouring money into warehouse upgrades, new facilities or other efforts that they say will also help trim costs.

Walmart uses more than 4,000 of its stores across the country as fulfillment centers and delivery hubs for online orders. In November, the company said it would be adding 40 so-called parcel stations to stores in nine states by the end of the year in an effort to process more goods and get them faster to customers. The nation's largest retailer said many of the stations — which are like mini post-offices that receive and deliver packages -- would be operating during the holiday season.

At the same time, the Bentonville, Arkansas-based company is working to overhaul its warehouses through automation to help speed up delivery to stores and customers.

Walmart is doing this in various ways: It's automating all 42 of its regional distribution centers, which hold non-perishable items and ship goods to replenish stores. Furthermore, it's building four automated warehouses that handle perishable items. And it's planning to add more than 100 smaller facilities that are connected to its stores and handle online orders.

Since last year, Walmart has also opened its first three fully automated "next generation" fulfillment centers, which hold a deeper assortment of the most wanted items and cut down the number of steps it takes to pack

and ship orders from 12 to five. The company has said these hubs, as well as changes to its transportation network, have made it able to "drastically increase" the number of orders it's able to ship the next day. The goal, Walmart says, is to double the number of customer orders fulfilled daily and expand next- and two-day shipping to nearly 90% of the US.

Meanwhile, Target is aiming to increase its shipping speed by augmenting its own warehouses, called sortation centers, with a $100 million investment announced earlier this year.

Sortation centers receive packages for online orders from 30 to 40 surrounding Target stores that are sorted, batched and routed for delivery to local neighborhoods by a third-party carrier or Shipt, which Target owns. The warehouses are expected to double their delivery volume to more than 50 million packages this year, with a growing number of items delivered to customers the next day. The company - which currently has 10 around the country and plans a modest increase to at least 15 by early 2026 -- said it expects to deliver 9 million packages from sortation centers during the holiday season.

"These facilities have transformed how we move inventory with speed and precision to guests' doorsteps," Target's executive vice president and chief operations officer John Mulligan told analysts earlier this year.

Though both Walmart and Target use their physical footprint to help fulfill online orders, Jason Goldberg, the chief commerce strategy officer at the advertising giant Publicis, noted that Amazon has far more warehouse space and trucks than Walmart and Target. He said even if both Target and Walmart were to dramatically add more delivery hubs, they still wouldn't be able to catch up with Amazon.

"It's almost hard to imagine you could ever catch up with Amazon's model," Goldberg added.

just answer®

Chat with a Mac Support Specialist in minutes, 24/7

Ask an Apple tech now

PLUSH BEDS

CALIFORNIA

SHOP NOW

KANSAS COURTS' COMPUTER SYSTEMS ARE STARTING TO COME BACK ONLINE, 2 MONTHS AFTER CYBERATTACK

The court system in Kansas has started bringing its computer system for managing cases back online, two months after a foreign cyberattack forced officials to shut it down along with public access to documents and other systems, the judicial branch announced.

The case management systems for district courts in 28 of the state's 105 counties are expected to be fully back online by the end of the week. Online access to documents for the public will be restored after that, though counties that go

back online will be able to offer access through terminals at their courthouses, the judicial branch said.

The courts also have restored systems that allow people to apply for marriage licenses online and file electronic requests for orders to protect them from abuse, stalking and human trafficking.

The Kansas Supreme Court's seven justices, who oversee administration of the state courts, said last month that the judicial branch was the victim of a "sophisticated foreign cyberattack." Criminals stole data and threatened to post it on a dark website "if their demands were not met," the justices said.

However, judicial branch officials have not publicly disclosed the hackers' demands, whether a ransom was paid or how much the state has spent in restoring judicial branch systems. Asked about a ransom last week, judicial branch spokesperson Lisa Taylor referred to last month's statement.

"Restoring our district court case management system is a much-anticipated milestone in our recovery plan, but we still have a lot of work to do," Supreme Court Chief Justice Marla Luckert said in a statement.

The outages affected the courts in 104 counties — all but the state's most populous one, Johnson County in the Kansas City area. Johnson County has its own systems and isn't scheduled to join the state's systems until next year.

The judicial branch initially described the attack as a "security incident," but cybersecurity experts said that it had the hallmarks of a ransomware attack — including in how court officials gave few details about what happened.

The long outage has forced courts in the affected counties to return to having documents filed on paper. Judicial branch officials acknowledged that it could take weeks for the courts to electronically log all of the filings since the Oct. 12 shutdown.

The electronic filing and case management systems for the state Court of Appeals and Supreme Court will come back online after the district courts are done.

A risk assessment of the state's court system, issued in February 2022, is kept "permanently confidential" under state law, as is one issued in June 2020.

Last month, state Rep. Kyle Hoffman, the chair of the Legislature's information technology committee, told reporters after a meeting that the results of the 2020 audit were terrible, but he provided no details. He said the 2022 audit showed a lot of improvement, again without disclosing any details.

Two recent audits of other state agencies identified cybersecurity weaknesses. The most recent one, released in July, said "agency leaders don't know or sufficiently prioritize their IT security responsvibilities."

LOVE IT OR HATE IT, SELF-CHECKOUT IS HERE TO STAY. BUT IT'S GOING THROUGH A RECKONING

SELF CHECK OUT
EXPRESS
7
SELF CHECK OUT
EXPRESS
6
YES you can scan your produce items
Credit or Debit
Thank You!
HAWORTH
DENTAL

The promise of self-checkout was alluring: Customers could avoid long lines by scanning and bagging their own items, workers could be freed of doing those monotonous tasks themselves and retailers could save on labor costs.

All that has happened since the rollout of self-checkout but so has this: Customers griping about clunky technology that spits out mysterious error codes, workers having to stand around and monitor both humans and machines, and retailers contending with theft.

“Going to the grocery store used to be simple, and now it’s frustrating,” said Cindy Whittington, 66, of Fairfax, Virginia. “You’re paying more. You’re working harder to pay for merchandise at their store. And it’s become an ordeal to check out. I should get a 5% discount.”

In 2021, self-checkout usage represented 30% of transactions, almost double from 2018, according to a survey of retailers by FMI, an industry group. And 96% of retailers surveyed offer self-checkout.

But the technology is also facing a reckoning amid the critical holiday shopping season. Some retailers are adding restrictions, while others are pulling out completely.

This past fall, Walmart removed self-checkout kiosks in three stores in Albuquerque, New Mexico as part of a location by location approach, but on the whole it is adding more than it is taking away. To reduce wait times, Target is now limiting the number of items to 10 that shoppers can scan in an handful of stores nationwide.

British supermarket chain Booths has been getting rid of its self-checkout at the majority of its stores for the past 18 months in reaction to customer backlash. A year ago, grocery chain Wegmans, citing "losses," discontinued its self-checkout app that lets shoppers scan and bag items while they shop. However, it continues to offer self-checkout registers at its stores.

Self-checkout, first tested in supermarkets in the late 1980s, gained momentum 20 years ago. But grocers ramped it up even more three years ago to address the pandemic-induced severe labor shortages.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics says technological advances such as self-checkout and online sales have been the main driver in the declining number of cashier jobs, although there are no precise estimates on how many cashiers have been replaced by self-checkout. According to Labor Department data, there are about 1.2 million people currently working as cashiers, compared to 1.4 million in 2019 and the BLS expects the number to fall by another 10% over the next decade.

"We are at an inflection point where if Americans are willing to do this and show an interest, then stores will probably expand it because they want to slash that labor cost," said Christopher Andrews, associate professor and chair of sociology at Drew University and author of "The Overworked Consumer: Self-Checkouts, Supermarkets and the Do-It-Yourself Economy."
"But right now they're just seeing downside. They're seeing frustrated customers. They're seeing increased costs and shoplifting."

Camera technology trial in progress

We're currently trialling new camera technology at our checkouts. The technology records you and the transaction, detecting when items aren't scanned correctly. The trial is being conducted to test the accuracy of the checkout process and new stock loss prevention technology.

If you do not wish to be part of the trial, please make your way to an express check out.

For more information about how Countdown manages personal information, our use of service providers, as well as details of how you can access your personal information or raise a concern, please visit **www.countdown.co.nz/info/policies/privacy-policy**

Chilled dips
Muesli bars
Desserts
Canned fruit

Theft is indeed an issue. Andrews said a technology that relies on shoppers to do their own scanning and punch in product quantities tempts even law abiding citizens to be dishonest. It's easy to just scan every other item or punch in codes for a cheaper item. Shoppers could also make honest mistakes, leading to losses for stores.

John Catsimatidis, chairman and CEO of Red Apple Group, owner of Gristedes and D'Agostino's food stores in New York City, said he has no interest in self-checkout because of theft.

"Anybody who does it might as well hit your head over with a pipe," he said.

Still, self-checkout isn't going away, especially with still stubborn labor shortages. And plenty of people love it.

Ellen Wulfhorst, 65, said using self-checkout brings back her childhood when she played with a toy register.

"There's something childish and fun about it," Wulfhorst said. "I get a big kick out of sliding the product across the reader, and it goes beep. There's a certain satisfaction to it."

For Robin Wissmann Doherty of South Salem, New York, who has a progressive neurodegenerative disease and uses a walker, self-checkout makes her shopping experience easier.

The 67-year-old said she likes to shop at Stop & Shop because it has a "scan and go" technology that allows her to scan her items with a device as she shops and then tallies up her bill. She can either pay at a kiosk or at a manned register.

"The laser gun works for disabled people," she said.

Stew Leonard Jr., president and CEO of Stew Leonard's, a supermarket chain that operates stores in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey, said 25% of its customers use self-service. That number could be up to 50% in the next few years. He noted one-third of its registers are unmanned, but he's in a "holding pattern" and is thinking of limiting the number of items to be scanned.

Retailers have been adding cameras or sensors at kiosks to monitor shoppers.

Kroger, for example, has deployed artificial intelligence technology at a majority of stores that triggers alerts when something is amiss. For example, if a shopper fails to scan a particular item successfully, the system flags the error on the screen and prompts the customer to self-correct. If customers are unable to resolve the issue themselves, a light above the self-checkout blinks to attract workers' attention.

There have been inroads for more advanced technology.

Amazon's "just walkout technology" is in more than 70 Amazon-owned stores and more than 100 third-party retailers across the U.S., including airports. It uses sophisticated cameras and allows shoppers to check in with Amazon's app on their phones and then walk out without having to check out. Japanese fashion retailer Uniqlo has RFID chips embedded in price tags to power a self-checkout system at its Fifth Avenue store in Manhattan, as part of a widescale rollout at its stores. Customers place their items in

SELF CHECK OUT
EXPRESS
2
EXPRESS
10
1980
1979
1975
1972
1971
1969
1968
1960
YES you can scan
your produce items
Credit
Closed

Self Checkout
Language
START
Find Web Order
Gift Card Balance
30-DAY STORE RETURN/EXCHANGE POLICY
Returns will only be accepted with an original purchase receipt. All merchandise must be returned or exchanged in the original selling condition, including the original product packaging, tags, and labels. Merchandise purchased in any U.S. store can only be returned or exchanged at any location within the U.S. for a full refund to the original form of payment up to 30 days from the purchase date. We cannot accept returns or exchanges for merchandise sold as final sale or personalized/altered items. Alterations fees are also non-refundable.
Items purchased online at www.UNIQLO.com, including Buy Online, Pick Up In-Store (BOPUS) orders, may not be returned to stores. UNIQLO reserves the right to limit or deny returns or exchanges. For the full return and exchange policy, please see https://uniqlo.us/storereturns.
RECEIPT
RECIBO
SCAN YOUR UNIQLO APP MEMBERSHIP ID HERE
ESCANEAR EL CÓDIGO DE LA UNIQLO APLICACIÓN AQUÍ

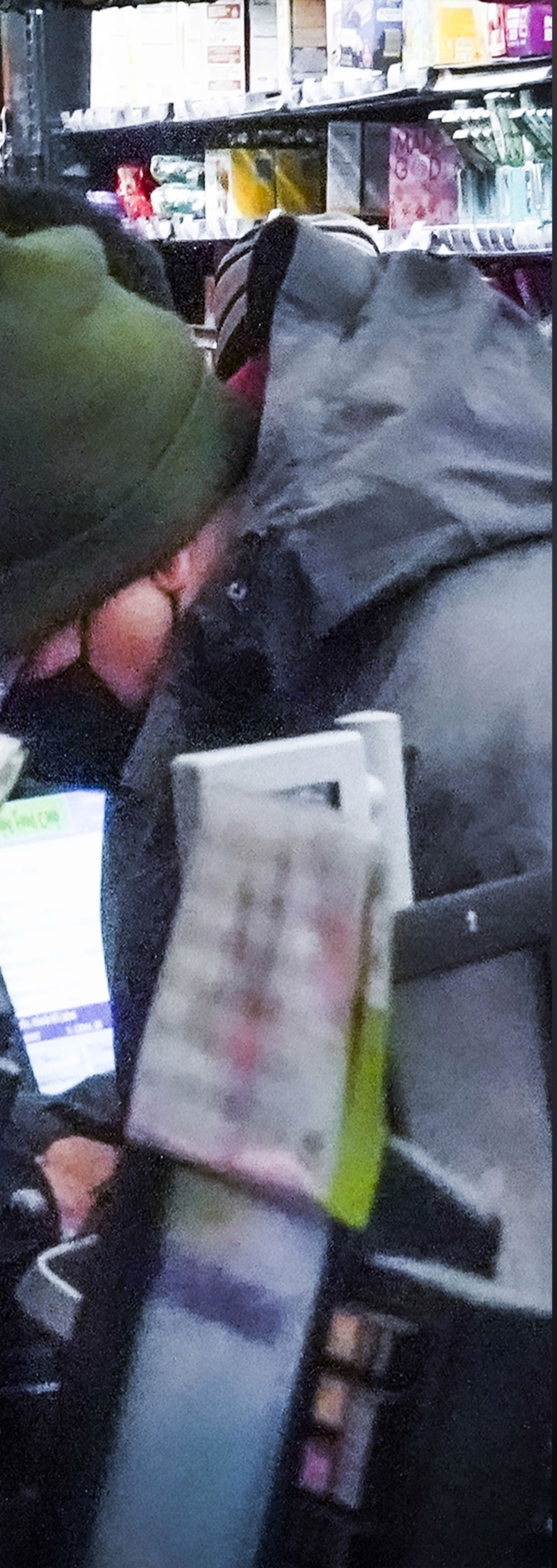
bins at self-service stations and pay — without having to scan items.

Still, for some workers who were supposed to be liberated from the monotonous task of ringing up customers, the tedium just comes in a different form.

Bernadette Christian, 59, a worker at Giant Food in Clinton, Maryland, mans six self-service stations at once, and she's afraid to help or confront shoppers who she said have become angrier since the pandemic.

"It would be easy for us to be cashiers, and it would be a lot more safer in today's world," she said.

DURING THE 2023 HOLIDAY SEASON, FACE MASKS HAVE SETTLED IN AS AN OCCASIONAL FEATURE OF AMERICAN LIFE



The scene: A crowded shopping center in the weeks before Christmas. Or a warehouse store. Or maybe a packed airport terminal or a commuter train station or another place where large groups gather.

There are people — lots of people. But look around, and it's clear one thing is largely absent these days: face masks.

Yes, there's the odd one here and there, but nothing like it was three years ago at the dawn of the COVID pandemic's first winter holidays — an American moment of contentiousness, accusation and scorn on both sides of the mask debate.

As 2023 draws to an end, with promises of holiday parties and crowds and lots of inadvertent exchanges of shared air, mask-wearing is much more off than on around the country even as COVID's long tail lingers. The days of anything approaching a widespread mask mandate would be like the Ghost of Christmas Past, a glimpse into what was.

Look at it a different way, though: These days, mask-wearing has become just another thing that simply happens in America. In a country where the mention of a mask prior to the pandemic usually meant Halloween or a costume party, it's a new way of being that hasn't gone away even if most people aren't doing it regularly.

"That's an interesting part of the pandemic," says Brooke Tully, a strategist who works on how to change people's behaviors.

"Home delivery of food and all of those kind of services, they existed before COVID and actually were gaining some momentum," she

says. “But something like mask-wearing in the U.S. didn’t really have an existing baseline. It was something entirely new in COVID. So it’s one of those new introductions of behaviors and norms.”

THE SITUATION NOW IS ... SITUATIONAL

It tends to be situational, like the recent decision from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center hospital system to reinstate a mask mandate at its facilities starting Dec. 20 because it’s seeing an increase in respiratory viruses. And for people like Sally Kiser, 60, of Mooresville, North Carolina, who manages a home health care agency.

“I always carry one with me,” she says, “’cause I never know.”

She doesn’t always wear it, depending on the environment she’s in, but she will if she thinks it’s prudent. “It’s kind of like a new paradigm for the world we live in,” she says.

It wasn’t that long ago that fear over catching COVID-19 sent demand for masks into overdrive, with terms like “N95” coming into our vocabularies alongside concepts like mask mandates — and the subsequent, and vehement, backlash from those who felt it was government overreach.

Once the mandates started dropping, the masks started coming off and the demand fell. It fell so much so that Project N95, a nonprofit launched during the pandemic to help people find quality masks, announced earlier this month that it would stop sales Monday because there wasn’t enough interest.

Anne Miller, the organization's executive director, acknowledges she thought widespread mask usage would become the rule, not the exception.

"I thought the new normal would be like we see in other cultures and other parts of the world — where people just wear a mask out of an abundance of caution for other people," she says.

But that's not how norms work, public safety or otherwise, says Markus Kemmelmeier, a professor of sociology at the University of Nevada, Reno.

In 2020, Kemmelmeier authored a study about mask-wearing around the country that showed mask usage and mandate resistance varied by region based on conditions including pre-existing cultural divisions and political orientation.

He points to the outcry after the introduction of seatbelts and seatbelt laws more than four decades ago as an example of how practices, particularly those required in certain parts of society, do or don't take hold.

"When they first were instituted with all the sense that they make and all the effectiveness, there was a lot of resistance," Kemmelmeier says. "The argument was basically lots of complaints about individual freedoms being curtailed and so forth, and you can't tell me what to do and so forth."

FIGURING OUT THE BALANCE

In New York City's Brooklyn borough, members of the Park Slope Co-op recently decided there was a need at the longstanding, membership-

required grocery. Last month, the co-op instituted mask-required Wednesdays and Thursdays; the other five days continue to have no requirement.

The people who proposed it weren't focused on COVID rates. They were thinking about immune-compromised people, a population that has always existed but came to mainstream awareness during the pandemic, says co-op general manager Joe Holtz.

Proponents of the mask push at the co-op emphasized that immunocompromised people are more at risk from other people's respiratory ailments like colds and flu. Implementing a window of required mask usage allows them to be more protected, Holtz says.

It was up to the store's administrators to pick the days, and they went with two of the slowest instead of the busy weekend days on purpose, Holtz says, a nod to the reality that mask requirements get different responses from people.

"From management's point of view," he says, "if we were going to try and if there's going to be a negative financial impact from this decision that was made, we want to minimize it."

Those shopping there on a recent Thursday didn't seem fazed.

Aron Halberstam, 77, says he doesn't usually mask much these days but wasn't put off by the requirement. He wears a mask on the days it's required, even if he doesn't otherwise — a middle ground reflecting what is happening in so many parts of the country more than three

MASKS ARE REQUIRED
ON THE SHOPPING FLOOR

WEDNESDAYS
&
THURSDAYS
8 am - 8 pm

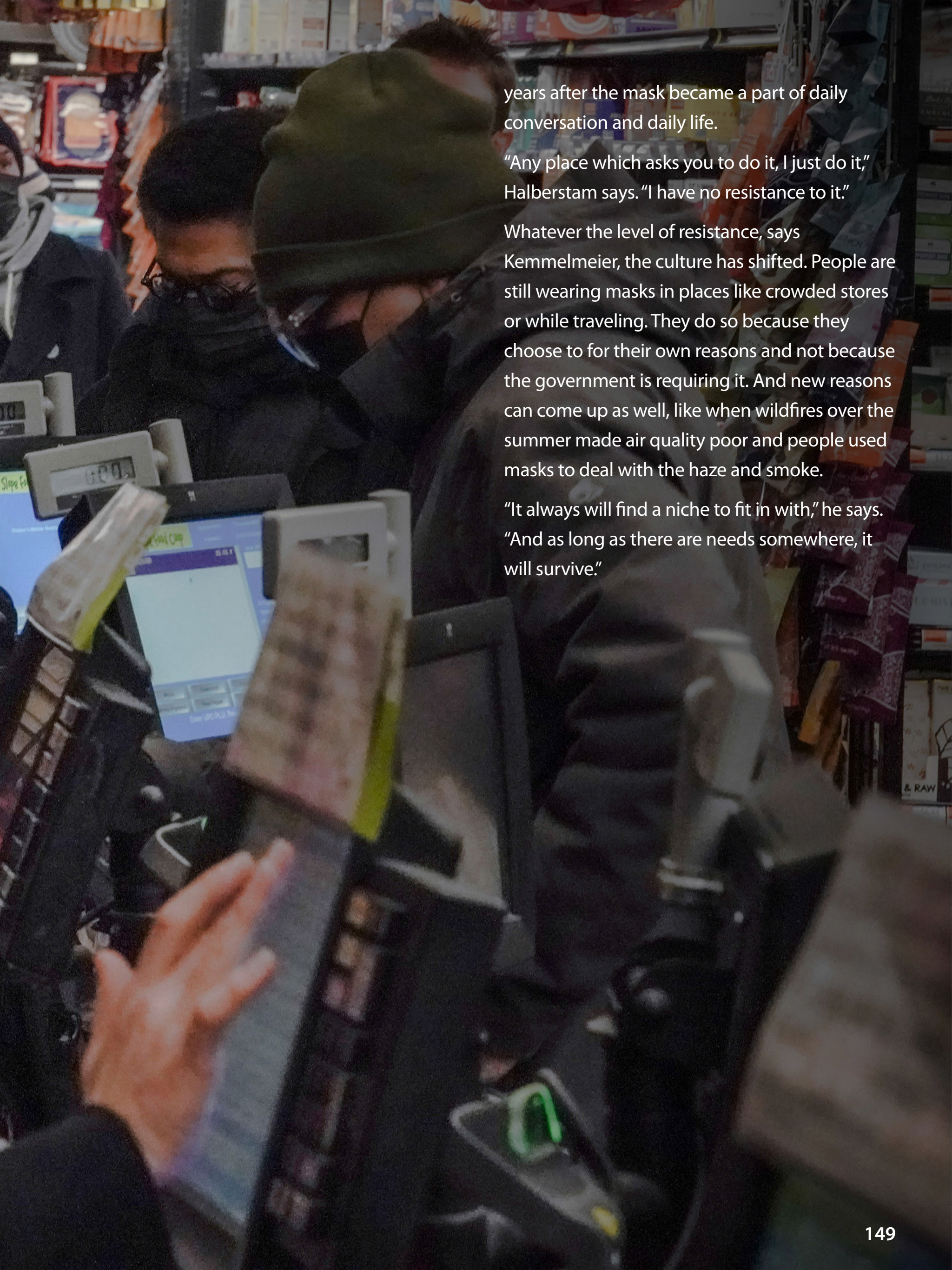
Mask policy approved by the 10/31/23 General Meeting.

THE COOP IS HIRING!

Want to join our fantastic Coop staff?
We're looking for enthusiastic members to fill these positions:

- **General Coordinator: Membership Operations**
- **FT Receiving Coordinator – Evenings & Weekends**

To apply use this link: **bit.ly/PSFCJobs** or scan this QR code.



years after the mask became a part of daily conversation and daily life.

"Any place which asks you to do it, I just do it," Halberstam says. "I have no resistance to it."

Whatever the level of resistance, says Kemmelmeier, the culture has shifted. People are still wearing masks in places like crowded stores or while traveling. They do so because they choose to for their own reasons and not because the government is requiring it. And new reasons can come up as well, like when wildfires over the summer made air quality poor and people used masks to deal with the haze and smoke.

"It always will find a niche to fit in with," he says. "And as long as there are needs somewhere, it will survive."

HOW TO MANAGE HOLIDAY SPENDING WHEN YOU'RE DEALING WITH STUDENT LOAN DEBT

2023
2023

For Nicole Plauché and her family, Christmas is the time of the year where they can use their preferred love language: gift giving. This year, however, Plauché is worried about how much she can afford to spend on gifts. Her main struggle? Student loan payments.

"It just doesn't leave much room for anything outside of just basic necessities," said Plauché, a 23-year old tech sales manager from Dallas, Texas.

Marisa Johnson, 26, has approximately $145,000 in student loan debt from both her bachelor's and master's degrees. Since the COVID-era payment pause ended in October, she's been paying back $300 a month while she waits to see if she'll be enrolled in a new income-driven repayment plan.

Because all of her money is going to necessities and paying back her student loans, Johnson hasn't been able to spend as much on gifts as in previous years.

"I've mostly been trying to think of affordable gifts or combining gifts with my older sister," said Johnson, a non-profit worker in Citrus Heights, California.

Plauché and Johnson are just two of the millions of people who had to start paying back student loans after the Biden administration ended the three-year payment pause.

"We know that the holidays are often a very joyful time of the year and an expensive one every year," said Courtney Alev, consumer financial advocate at Credit Karma. "With federal student loan payments just resuming, it's going to add another often very significant line item into holiday budgets."

If student loan payments are cutting into what used to be your holiday budget, here are some recommendations:

THE PRESSURE IS REAL

From family expectations to social media and TV ads showing lavish gifts, many people feel that the only way they can show love is to spend a lot of money.

Between being a mom and a new grad with a salary to match, Plauché says she can barely manage her daily expenses. Still, she feels a responsibility to give her family gifts because that's how they have traditionally shown each other love.

"I don't want to give my family this message that they're not loved and it definitely adds a lot of pressure," she said.

Johnson feels guilty because the holidays are the time she feels she can show her family how grateful she is for them. She has always prided herself on being a great gift giver who not only finds something nice but knows how to spot unique and special gifts.

"I think I'm a little embarrassed to tell them that this year I might not be able to be a good gift giver," said Johnson.

Acknowledging that you're feeling pressure is a good first step towards making a plan to set expectations and be realistic about what you can spend.

BUDGET

Alev is a big proponent of the 50-30-20 budgeting method, where 50% of your income

FSA

plication for Feder

is allocated for necessities like food and rent, 30% for things you want, and 20% for savings and debt repayment.

To find space in your budget for gifts, Alev recommends that you plan ahead as much as possible and only take money from the 30% portion of your budget.

If the 50-30-20 is not the right format for you, there are plenty of other budgeting methods that you can use. Whether is recording your spending on an Excel spreadsheet, using an app or writing it down on a notebook, keeping a budget is most effective when you do it in a format that works for you.

If you are looking for a budget template, Microsoft Office offers a holiday spending-focused version.

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR LOVED ONES

If you're experiencing a lot of financial pressure this holiday season, Alev recommends that you try to communicate your feelings to your loved ones.

"One of the hardest things is resentment can build up if you feel like you need to buy gifts for your family and you can barely make your student loan payments, so bring things up," Alev said.

Sharing your financial struggles can be hard. If you want to talk but don't want to share every detail of your financial struggles, that's okay. Ultimately, what you want is for your loved ones to understand how you're feeling.

Plauché just recently started sharing her money worries with her family.

“I have been open with my family, just that I’m not going to be able to give gifts that year,” she said.

EXPERIENCES VS. GIFTS

Another great way to save money is to skip material gifts and instead, grant your time. In many cases, your family would rather spend quality time with you.

Alev recommended planning low-cost activities such as a hike with your family, or attending a free event in your city. Other options can be a holiday movie marathon with your friends, a free museum with your parents or a volunteering day with your family.

USE CREDIT RESPONSIBLY

Since Plauché is already paying her student loan debt every month, she is avoiding using her credit card this holiday season to avoid carrying more debt.

If using your credit card is your only option, it’s important that you use it wisely.

If you struggle with overspending during the holidays, Alev also recommends setting a budget for each of your credit cards.

If you can’t pay your balance in full every month, it’s important that you understand when you payment is due and have a plan to avoid paying a lot of interest.

If you’re planning to use “ buy now, pay later services “, it’s best to be very intentional, Alev said.

"It's easy to get caught up. It's easy to use it a lot and have several different payments that will come down the road," she said.

AFFORDABLE ALTERNATIVES

There is more than one way to find the "perfect" gift for your family and it doesn't always involve spending a lot. In her quest to find gifts that don't cause her financial stress, Johnson has been getting creative.

"I've definitely been trying to save or just make gifts because I don't really have the disposable income to buy other people gifts or even buy myself a Christmas gift," Johnson said.

She's been looking into gifting a used book to her dad and because she loves painting and already has all the tools, she's working on a painting for her mom.

Other affordable alternatives can be sending hand written notes to your loved ones, buying from thrift stores, hosting a cookie bake off or simply spending quality time with your family.

MARK WAHLBERG ON HIS ACTION-COMEDY ‘THE FAMILY PLAN’ & HIS DREAMS FOR HOLLYWOOD 2.0

Mark Wahlberg knows as well as any parent that it’s hard to find a movie everyone in the household wants to watch – especially with teenagers around. It’s part of the reason he latched on to “The Family Plan,” a charming action-comedy about a former assassin turned suburban dad whose past catches up with him. It’s streaming on Apple TV+.

“You always have movies that parents can go to with the kids and they’ll tolerate them

V+
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
0
ENT

because the kids really want to see it or vice versa," Wahlberg told the AP. "But this really felt like it was a movie that actually was for the whole family."

Early in "The Family Plan," his character is attacked in a grocery store and he must fend off the assailant with his 10-month-old in a baby-carrier on his chest. With his minivan cover blown, he then must convince his wife and teenagers to embark on a cross-country road trip to outrun the danger that he's also desperately trying to keep secret from them.

The grocery store fight with the baby needed to be a big, tone-setting moment. Director Simon Cellan Jones, a veteran television director whose credits include "Boardwalk Empire," thought it was a "fantastic concept. It was a real spin on an action movie scene."

But he also wanted to use real babies rather than dolls. That, everyone quickly found, would prove immensely difficult.

"The baby's supposed to be enjoying seeing daddy in action. The baby and the audience are they only ones privy to that. But getting (the twins) to chuckle or laugh while somebody's kicking or flinging us around, that was next to impossible," Wahlberg said. "I thought we were in trouble."

Then in the editing room, they were relieved to discover that the babies had in fact performed. As Wahlberg said, the twins knew when to turn it on.

"I'm very proud of that scene," Cellan Jones said.

Wahlberg called on Michelle Monaghan to see if she'd want to star opposite him as his wife, a

character eager for more spontaneity in their life. The two had enjoyed working together on the Boston Marathon bombings drama "Patriot's Day" — and he even calls her "captain fun" on set — but Monaghan was mostly excited to get a comedy.

"It was truly one of the funniest scripts I've read in a long time," Monaghan said. "Creatively, I was super excited because it has a lot of facets of what I like to do as an artist with action and comedy. There are inventive, high-octane action sequences. But, at the heart of it, is this really, really sweet family that you're rooting for."

They filmed much of the movie in Wahlberg's new hometown of Las Vegas, where he dreams of creating a Hollywood 2.0 with tax credits, a studio and more affordable housing and better quality of life for crews. He and his family relocated from Los Angeles last year, and he's already made two movies there.

"People know how serious we are, but you can't put the carriage before the horse," Wahlberg said. "There are tons of talented people here, but also to attract new people you have to make sure that there is a guarantee you work for X amount of time. And (the state) wants to make sure that if they're giving up the tax credit that people are going to come."

"We're getting close," he added. "I think they're very excited to create a new industry outside of gaming."

Wahlberg has another movie with Cellan Jones on the way too, "Arthur the King," based on the true story of an adventure racer who befriends a stray dog who accompanies his team on a 435-mile journey through the Dominican Republic.

FOODS

"It's a very different movie," Cellan Jones laughed. "It's about finding heroes in unlikely places... And if you like dogs, you're going to love this movie."

Like "The Family Plan," Wahlberg also produced "Arthur the King," which will be released theatrically from Lionsgate in March. When it comes to questions of theatrical versus streaming, he said he's just rolling with the punches and trying to stay ahead of the curve.

"In a perfect world, we all wanted to hold on to theatrical as much as possible. But people decided long ago how and where they wanted to consume their content," Wahlberg said. "And working with a company like Apple is very exciting to me."

Besides, he found the living room television was actually the perfect place to watch "The Family Plan."

"I went to watch the first cut of the movie in my home and, it's PG-13, there was only one F-bomb, so it was safe to turn on in the living room as opposed to hiding somewhere. And then slowly but surely everyone was sitting around the TV watching and enjoying the film, without any devices or distraction," Wahlberg said. "It was nice to see that."

TIMOTHÉE CHALAMET WALTZES THROUGH THE WHIMSICAL ‘WONKA’ BUT ROALD DAHL’S DARING IS MISSING

The original 1971 "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory" may have been a delicious dream, lined with trees of gumballs and fields of lollipops. But never has there been a more cautionary tale about the danger of too much of a good thing.

Magical as that Roald Dahl-scripted film was, it remains lodged in our imaginations less for its sugary goodness than the way darkness, satire and even mania ebb around its edges — flowing down that nightmarish watery tunnel and pooling somewhere in the back of Gene Wilder's eyes. Charlie Bucket and Grandpa Joe may bubble with laughter all the way up the ceiling, but there's a spinning metal blade up there.

"Wonka," the latest attempt to revisit Dahl's masterwork, bears no such danger. It's going more for the taste of an Everlasting Gobstopper — an ingenious confection that piles flavor on top of flavor. Tasty though that can be, you miss the daring of Dahl in the more wanly whimsical "Wonka."

Still, the movie has two big things going for it: the charisma of its winning star, Timothée Chalamet, and the dazzling designs of its director, Paul King, the don of "Paddington." To a large degree, King has applied much of the formula that defined "Paddington" — and that "Godfather Part II" of sequels, "Paddington 2" — to a Wonka origin story that populates a delightfully detailed world with a delightful array of supporting characters (many of whom are "Paddington" veterans). Did I say it's delightful?

Yet it's that strain to delight that keeps "Wonka" from achieving liftoff. King's film is lively but too neutered to do Dahl justice; congenial but

Wonka | Official Trailer

not clever enough to match the giddy joy of "Paddington 2." If Tim Burton's 2005 film, with Johnny Depp giving Wonka a Michael Jackson spin, leaned into creepiness, "Wonka" goes the opposite direction.

And you might fairly wonder: What's so wrong that? Who doesn't want a cynicism-free, candy-colored charm overload? "Wonka" may be too much of a good thing, but for many (particularly kids) it will surely, well, delight. Even for a movie predicated on retooling IP, "Wonka" comes across as remarkably sincere in its feel-good aspirations.

In the film's opening scenes, Willy (Chalamet) breezes into a frigid, unnamed European-styled city, singing "I've got nothing to offer but my chocolate and a hatful of dreams." He arrives like a too-confident traveling salesman, eager to sell his chocolate to the world.

Immediately fleeced of his few coins, Willy sets down on a bench for the night and pulls a candle out of his hat that he lights with a gentle blow. He's offered a bed for the night at inn. There, the innkeeper Mrs. Scrubit (Olivia Colman) and her henchman Bleacher (Tom Davis) trap needy drifters into years of indentured labor with elaborate contracts.

This Wonka can't read, a twist that I doubt Dahl would have endorsed, given how much, for him, reading and imagination were intertwined. Before Willy has even gotten started, he finds himself imprisoned with a handful of other similarly misfortunate souls, including the young Noodle (a very natural Calah Lane).

But inspired by his late mother (Sally Hawkins, seen in tender childhood flashbacks), Willy isn't much daunted in his dream to open a shop

Wonka | Trailer #2

alongside other candy makers in the Galeries Gourmet. He manages to escape repeatedly to dazzle customers with chocolates of exotic ingredients before slipping through manhole covers to make a getaway, like Harry Lime in "The Third Man."

Sensing the potential power of Wonka's enchanting chocolates (some cause levitation), the monopolizing local chocolatiers — Slugworth (Paterson Joseph), Prodnose (Matt Lucas) and Fickelgruber (Mathew Baynton) — band together to squash Willy with the aid of a chocolate-addicted police chief (Keegan-Michael Key), whose waistline expands throughout the film.

That bit, like most others in the film, doesn't quite land despite the good cheer it's delivered with. "Wonka" assembles a wide array of top-notch comic actors — not only Key and Colman but Hugh Grant as an Oompa Loompa; Simon Farnaby (who co-wrote the script with King) as a security guard, mirroring his "Paddington 2" cameo; and Rowan Atkinson as a corrupt priest.

But most of the jokes in "Wonka" are as memorable as its songs. The gag of Grant, the "Paddington 2" MVP, smothered in orange makeup and green hair as a proudly debonair Oompa Loompa, is never quite as clever as the movie thinks it is. On the press trail for the film, Grant has been 10 times funnier.

Neil Hannon's songs are generic, but Chalamet sings them well. When a few notes from Leslie Bricusse and Anthony Newley's "Pure Imagination" float by, they only serve as a reminder to how much better the tunes were in the original.

I may be being too hard on "Wonka." This is an eminently pleasant movie, propped up by

Wonka | Funny Little Man Clip

Wonka | "A Good Chocolate" Clip

its indefatigable good cheer and King's immaculately tidy craftsmanship. The costumes (Lindy Hemming), cinematography (Chung-hoon Chung) and, in particular, the ingenious production design (Nathan Crowley) craft a wonder-filled backdrop. A film doesn't need scenery this good for Chalamet to carry it. His Wonka is simpler and brighter than Wilder's, more a figure of pure optimism, like Paddington.

But we've also had some exemplary Dahl adaptations lately that didn't forget that worlds of imagination come alive when the cruelties of life and of childhood aren't just paid lip service. (Veruca Salt or Mike Teavee, for instance, wouldn't fit anywhere in "Wonka.") I'm thinking of Wes Anderson's inventive Dahl-adapted shorts, released this fall on Netflix, and Matthew Warchus' terrific "Matilda the Musical," from last year. "Wonka" is a more mixed addition: More tailored for kids yet less about childhood.

"Wonka," a Warner Bros. release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association for "some violence, mild language and thematic elements." Running time: 116 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

Image: Kin Cheung

PRINCE HARRY'S PHONE HACKING VICTORY IS A LANDMARK IN THE LONG SAGA OF BRITISH TABLOID MISCONDUCT

Prince Harry's victory against Mirror Group Newspapers over what a British judge called "habitual" illegal activity is a landmark moment in the long and twisting saga of lawbreaking by Britain's tabloid press.

Judge Timothy Fancourt ruled that Mirror newspapers had hired private investigators to snoop for personal information and engaged in illegal phone hacking for well over a decade.

It's the latest chapter in a tale of tabloid power and attempts to tame it stretching back years — but it's unlikely to be the end of the story.

WHAT IS PHONE HACKING?

In the pre-digital era, Britain's fiercely competitive tabloid newspapers sold millions of copies a day and would go to great lengths to get scoops, including by using underhanded techniques.

One method was phone hacking — calling someone's number and punching in 0000 or another default PIN number in hope that would give access to their voice messages. Often, it did.

Targets included members of the royal family, politicians, athletes, celebrities, friends and family of famous people and ordinary citizens who found themselves caught in the public eye.

Fancourt said in his ruling that phone hacking was "habitual" at Mirror newspapers as far back as 1998, and went on until at least 2011.

WHEN DID THE PUBLIC FIND OUT ABOUT IT?

The first most people knew about phone hacking was when the royal editor of the News of the World and a private investigator for the paper were jailed in 2007 for eavesdropping on messages left by Prince William and others on the phones of royal aides.

The paper's owner, Rupert Murdoch, dismissed the wrongdoing as the work of two rogue employees. Then, in 2011, it emerged that the News of the World had hacked the phone of Milly Dowler, a 13-year-old girl who was abducted and later found murdered.

The outcry opened the floodgates on a scandal that forced Murdoch to shut down the 168-year-old tabloid, Britain's best-selling newspaper.

Image: Alberto Pezzali

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

The government set up a judge-led public inquiry into media ethics, which examined the complex web of ties — close and, some said, too cozy — binding Britain's political, media and police elite. Justice Brian Leveson recommended the creation of a strong press watchdog, backed by government regulation. His findings have been partially implemented but have been resisted by large segments of the press, wary of state interference.

Judge Fancourt said it was clear that Leveson had not been told the full truth. He said the Mirror's wrongdoing "was concealed from the board, from Parliament ... from the Leveson Inquiry, from shareholders, and from the public for years."

After the 2011 revelations, several editors and executives at the News of the World were charged with illegal phone hacking. After an eight-month trial at London's Central Criminal Court, former editor Andy Coulson was sentenced to 18 months in prison in 2014 for conspiring to hack phones. Five other defendants were acquitted, while several others entered guilty pleas.

Since then, there have been no more criminal cases, but Murdoch's News Group and the Mirror Group have paid hundreds of millions to settle claims from dozens of alleged victims of hacking and other illegal activity. The publisher of the Daily Mail, Associated Newspapers, faces hacking lawsuits from Prince Harry, Elton John and others.

Image: Toby Melville

WHAT DOES THE LATEST JUDGMENT MEAN?

While many tabloid targets have accepted out-of-court settlements, Prince Harry was determined to go before a judge. The Mirror Group case is one of three lawsuits he has launched against newspaper publishers — and the first to reach a full trial.

Harry has made it his mission to tame the tabloid press, which he blames for the death of his mother Princess Diana, for hounding him throughout his youth and for helping drive him and his wife Meghan out of the United Kingdom.

He said in a statement read by his lawyer David Sherborne outside the High Court in London: "Today is a great day for truth, as well as accountability."

The judge awarded Harry a modest 140,000 pounds ($180,000) in damages, but the case is likely to cost the Mirror Group much more than that, since the findings could strengthen the claims of others who have filed suits against the company. The publisher has already paid more than 100 million pounds ($126 million) to settle claims of unlawful information-gathering.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THOSE INVOLVED?

In a partial win for the company, the judge ruled against two of Harry's co-claimants on the grounds that they had waited too long to take legal action.

Mirror Group's parent company, Reach PLC, said that the judgment was expected to "reduce the number of live claims, and

substantially limit and bar all or most future claims" for historical wrongdoing.

The ruling could have severe ramifications for Sly Bailey, former chief executive of the Mirror Group's parent company, and the firm's ex-legal director, Paul Vickers. The judge said they both knew about the hacking and covered it up.

It also piles pressure on broadcaster Piers Morgan, a former Daily Mirror editor who has always denied that he knew about phone hacking at the paper. The judge said there was "compelling evidence" that editors of all the Mirror newspapers knew phone hacking "was being used extensively and habitually."

"I've never hacked a phone or told anybody else to hack a phone," Morgan reiterated after the verdict.

Prince Harry said people involved in the lawbreaking should face criminal charges.

"I respectfully call upon the authorities, the financial regulator, the stock market who were deliberately deceived by Mirror Group, and indeed the Metropolitan Police and prosecuting authorities to do their duty for the British public and to investigate bringing charges against the company and those who have broken the law," he said in a statement.

Image: Jaap Arriens

AMAZON WON'T HAVE TO PAY HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS IN BACK TAXES AFTER WINNING EU CASE

Amazon won't have to pay about 250 million euros ($273 million) in back taxes after European Union judges ruled in favor of the U.S. e-commerce giant, dealing a defeat to the 27-nation bloc in its efforts to tackle corporate tax avoidance.

The ruling by the EU's top court is final, ending the long-running legal battle over tax arrangements between Amazon and Luxembourg's government and marking a further setback for a crackdown by antitrust chief Margrethe Vestager.

The Court of Justice backed a 2021 decision by judges in a lower court who sided with Amazon, saying the European Commission, the EU's executive branch, had not proved its case that Amazon received illegal state support.

"The Court of Justice confirms that the Commission has not established that the tax ruling given to Amazon by Luxembourg was a State aid that was incompatible with the internal market" of the EU, the court said in a press release.

amazon

Image: Carlos Jasso

Amazon welcomed the ruling, saying it confirms that the company "followed all applicable laws and received no special treatment."

"We look forward to continuing to focus on delivering for our customers across Europe," the company said in a statement.

The commission said it "will carefully study the judgment and assess its implications."

The case dates back to 2017, when Vestager charged Amazon with unfairly profiting from special low tax conditions since 2003 in tiny Luxembourg, where its European headquarters are based. As a result, almost three-quarters of Amazon's profits in the EU were not taxed, she said.

The EU has taken aim at deals between individual countries and companies used to lure foreign multinationals in search of a place to establish their EU headquarters. The practice led to EU states competing with each other and multinationals playing them off one another.

ADOBE CALLS OFF $20 BILLION DEAL FOR FIGMA AFTER PUSHBACK FROM EUROPE OVER POSSIBLE ANTITRUST ISSUES

Adobe's planned $20 billion acquisition of online design company Figma is being called off due to pushback in Europe over antitrust concerns, the companies said this week.

The companies announced the cash-and-stock deal in September 2022, seeking a path with Figma's web-based, multi-player capabilities to accelerate the delivery of Adobe's creative cloud technologies on the web.

"Although both companies continue to believe in the merits and procompetitive benefits of the combination, Adobe and Figma mutually agreed to terminate the transaction based on a joint assessment that there is no clear path to receive necessary regulatory approvals from the European Commission and the UK Competition and Markets Authority," Adobe and Figma said in a prepared statement.

The European Commission said that it was aware of the decision to terminate the deal and that its investigation into the proposed transaction had now ended.

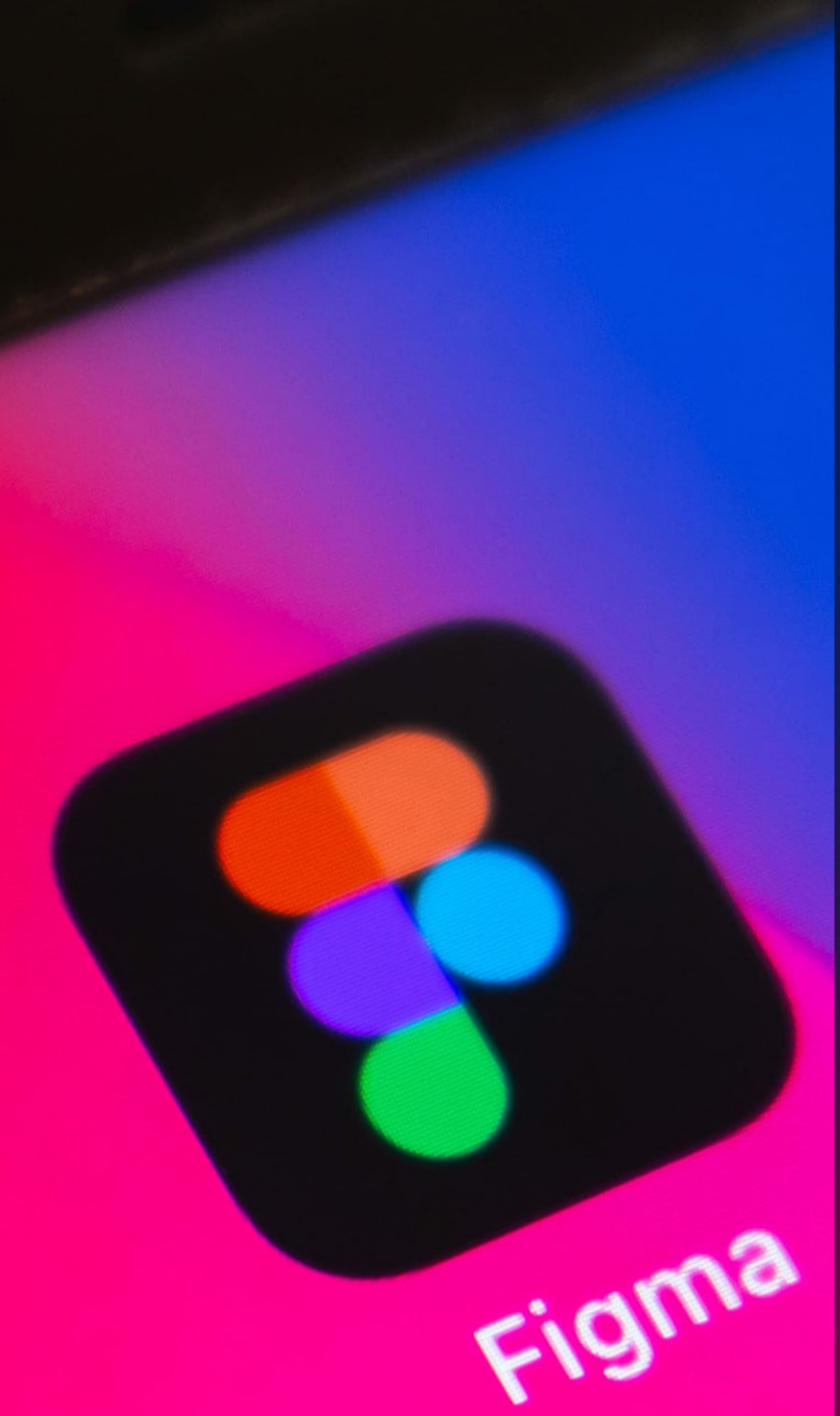
U.S. companies have regularly run into roadblocks in Europe over similar concerns of monopolies.

Biotech giant Illumina said that it will undo its $7.1 billion purchase of the cancer-screening company Grail after losing legal battles with antitrust enforcers in the U.S. and Europe. Late last month, European regulators said that Amazon's proposed acquisition of robot vacuum maker iRobot may harm competition.

In October, Microsoft completed its purchase of video game-maker Activision Blizzard for $69 billion after a bruising fight with antitrust regulators in Europe and the U.S.

#TeamJunckerEU
Europese
Commissie
Commission
européenne
European
Commission
European
Commission
ec.europa.eu

22:12
Adobe



Last month the Markets Authority said that an early review of a potential tie-up between the two companies suggested a “substantial lessening of competition” in the global market for all-in-one product design software for professionals, as well as editing software.

Figma, founded in 2012, allows those who design interactive mobile and web applications to collaborate through multi-player workflows, sophisticated design systems and a developer ecosystem.

Adobe, based in San Jose, California, sells software for creating, publishing and promoting content, and managing documents.

David Wadhwani, president, Digital Media Business, at Adobe, said in prepared statement that the software company will continue to look for ways to partner with Figma in the future.

The companies said that they have signed a termination agreement that resolves all outstanding matters from the transaction. Adobe Inc. will pay Figma a termination fee of $1 billion, which was previously agreed to.

Shares of Adobe rose slightly in morning trading.

THE NETHERLANDS, SOUTH KOREA STEP UP STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP INCLUDING COOPERATION ON SEMICONDUCTOR

The Netherlands and South Korea are stepping up cooperation in the field of semiconductor chips as part of a deepening "strategic partnership," caretaker Prime Minister Mark Rutte said Wednesday.

The Dutch leader spoke after a meeting with South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol during his two-day state visit. Their meeting came a day after Yoon visited the headquarters of semiconductor chip machine maker ASML.

"Our countries are now going to step up our cooperation in this field. This is a promising initiative, and it is also, I believe, a real win-win situation," Rutte said.

As part of the visit, South Korean nuclear power company KHNP signed a contract to carry out a feasibility study into the construction of two new nuclear power plants in the southern Dutch town of Borselle. U.S. company Westinghouse and France's EDF will soon sign similar contracts, the Dutch government announced.

Borselle, near the border with Belgium and the North Sea coast, is home to the Netherlands' only nuclear power station.

"Nuclear energy helps us on our way to a CO2-free energy system," Dutch Climate and Energy Minister Rob Jetten said in a statement. "That is why we are preparing for the construction of two new nuclear power stations. The three parties that are eligible for this new construction will carry out technical feasibility studies in the coming year."

The Netherlands and South Korea also agreed to increase cooperation in digital technologies including artificial intelligence, mobile communications and quantum research,

Economic Affairs and Climate Minister Micky Adriaansens said in a statement.

Yoon's visit comes less than a month after he also agreed to build stronger trade and defense ties with the United Kingdom.

ABOUT ASML

ASML was founded as a joint venture between Philips and ASM International, the name 'Advanced Semiconductor Materials Lithography' was chosen and used as 'ASM Lithography' to reflect the partners in the joint venture. Over time, this name has become simply 'ASML'.

ASML is one of the world's leading manufacturers of chip-making equipment. It's a common misconception that we make chips, also called microchips or integrated circuits (ICs), but we actually design and manufacture the lithography machines that are an essential component in chip manufacturing. Our customers are companies such as Intel, who use our machines in 'fabs' – microchip manufacturing plants – to create microchips that are eventually used in many electronic devices, including smartphones, laptops and much more.

There are more than 39,000 employees on payroll and flexible contracts, spread across offices in more than 60 locations worldwide. The company's headquarters, located in Veldhoven, the Netherlands, comprises over half of all employees – more than 16,800 people work there.

YOUR BRAND HAS NEVER BEEN IN SUCH GOOD COMPANY

ads@techlifenews.com

MindfieldDigital™

MASTHEAD

TECHLIFE NEWS INTERNATIONAL
TechLifeNewsMagazine.com

SOCIAL NETWORKS

Twitter
@Techlife_News
twitter.com/#!/Techlife_News

Facebook
facebook.com/TechlifeNews

SUBSCRIPTIONS

TechLife News Website
techlifenewsmagazine.com

iTunes App Store™ / Newsstand
itunes.apple.com/app/techlife-news/id529054466?mt=8

CONTACTS

Executive Director - ceo@techlifenewsmagazine.com
Relationship Management - crm@techlifenewsmagazine.com
Editor - editor@techlifenewsmagazine.com
Advertise - ads@techlifenewsmagazine.com
Social Network - network@techlifenewsmagazine.com
Promotions - promo@techlifenewsmagazine.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ivan Castilho
Chief Executive Officer / Design Conception

MINDFIELD DIGITAL ART & GRAPHIC DESIGN

Milene Mencari
Graphic Production Coordinator

Natielly Dias
Graphic Design Producer

Saulo Cardoso
Graphic Design Producer

Ketlyn Hanna
Graphic Design Producer

Claudio Magalhaes
Graphic Design Producer

OFFICIAL WEBSITE

Jack Crute
Newsroom Production

MAGAZINE EDITORIAL CONTENT

Benjamin Kerry
Chief Editor

WRITERS

Precise English Inc.
Gavin Lenaghan
Craig Lenaghan
Shanon O'Dovovan

COLUMNS

DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW
Gavin Lenaghan

FINANCE NEWS
Associated Press / Bloomberg

REVISION

Gavin Lenaghan
Jack Crute

PRODUCTION SUPPORT / COLLABORATORS

Rui da Costa
Segolene Vincent
Fabian Groenhof
Lise Berda
James Jarvis
Richard Sawyer
Lauren Brown
Matthew Coburn
Jeffrey Milks
Susan Kiesling
Raquel Serrano
Robert Fluellen
Lisa Swiniarski
Roger Gayalkar
Icy Ventura
Pilar Bescos
Candice Liu
Sharnae Hughes
Saikumar B
Ryan Szloch
Ryan Szloch
Ciera Chang
Trevor Carroll
Oscar Garcia
Jenny Marry
Sierra Simon
Sharon Ferraro
Devesh Kamal

PRIVACY POLICY

techlifenewsmagazine.com/privacy-policy/

TERMS OF USE

techlifenewsmagazine.com/terms-of-use/

TECHLIFE NEWS© Copyright 2021-2012. All Rights Reserved.

No part of the document may be circulated, quoted, or reproduced for distribution without prior written approval. Proper Trademark Notice and Attribution iPad, iPhone, Apple Watch, AirPods, AirTag, HomePod, Mac, iMac, Macbook, iOS, iPadOS, macOS are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. Please contact support for additional trademark ownership rights information. The following is a list of Apple's trademarks and service marks http://www.apple.com/legal/ trademark/appletmlist.html. All other trademarks are the properties of their owners.

TechLife News is an independent publication and has not been authorized, sponsored, or otherwise approved by Apple Inc., Alphabet Inc., Google, Facebook, Microsoft Inc. or any other technology company or brand.

TechLife NEWS

TechlifeNews.com